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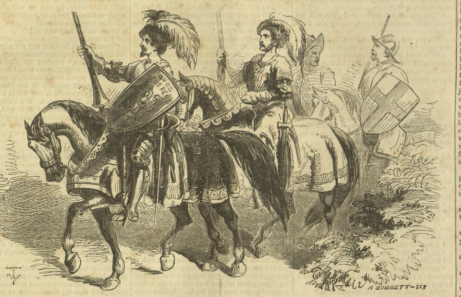
THE WILD KNIGHT;
OR,
THE UNKNOWN CRUSADER.

A TALE OF GERMANY IN THE DAYS OF THE EMPIRE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.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THE UNKNOWN CRUSADER AND HIS COMPANIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE UNKNOWN AND HIS COMPANIONS.

At the time of which we write, the German Empire was in anything but a tranquil state. Rudolf of Hapsburg had been elected Emperor solely because he was a brave, unscrupulous man. He had accepted the imperial post with the pledge that he would be the blind, unswerving tool of the church. The Hanse Towns, or cities, were leagued together for mutual interest and protection, forming so many almost independent governments. The princes were in many instances reduced in power, holding the peasants in vassalage; while over all, and carrying terror even to the stout cities, were those wild, robber knights, whose castles, like the eyries of the eagles, were perched away upon mountains and rocks, from whence their reckless lords looked down in disdain upon all who dwelt beneath. In the East the crusades were drawing to a close. Baldwin II. had been driven from the throne of Byzantium; Jerusalem was in the hands of the sons of Islam; Antioch had been taken with the slaughter of seventeen thousand Christians, while a hundred thousand more were dragged away into slavery; Armenia had been overrun and conquered; a large portion of the army of Louis of France had either died of disease, or by the hand of the Saracen, and the remainder had returned to their Western homes. Yet there were many Christians in the Holy Land, and Gregory tried hard to send out more, but he did not succeed. Even his pliant tool, the Emperor Rudolf von Hapsburg, refused to obey him in this.

It was an afternoon in the spring of 1274. Since noon the heavens had been mantled with clouds, and now, when the sun had some four hours more to run, the wind had sprung up, and the signs were that rain was near at hand.

Upon the dubious road from Brakenhiem to Durmen, just in the north-eastern confines of the Black Forest, rode four armed men. He who rode in advance—for the path was so narrow here among the huge rocks that two could not ride abreast—was a noble-looking knight, tall and powerfully built, clothed in complete armor, with his heavy battle-axe slung in its becket by his side; his lance at rest, and his helm suspended from a loop at the saddle-bow. The armor was black as night—all save the gorget, which was of burnished gold, set with precious stones. Even the casque was of the sable hue, though the three brilliant ostrich feathers which floated from the top relieved the sombre effect. Upon his head he wore a light cap of purple velvet, with no other ornament than a rich brooch of gold and emeralds which secured the crimson ostrich plume in its place. His face was one of rare and startling beauty—one of those faces which awaken envy in the bosom of beaux, and quick love in the souls of the gentler sex. His brow was high and full, and about it and the fair neck floated glossy masses of light, sunny hair. His eyes were of a deep blue; his nose straight and finely carved; his lips fairly proportioned and wreathed with a half-waking smile, and his cheeks full, and flushed with the ruddy glow of health and vigor. His surcoat, which hung across the saddle, bore upon the breast the red cross of the Crusaders. His shield bore a strange device. It was a child killing an eagle, with this inscription:—"QUOD DEUS BENE VERTAT," which may be rendered,—*May God bring it to a good result.* The child was upon its knees, with one hand clasped about the eagle's throat, while the other held a raised dagger. The knight could not have been over thirty years of age, though he had surely seen much of life.

And now what is this bold knight's name? In Palestine he was known as "THE KNIGHT OF THE EAGLE," and finally, to shorten the name, he was called "THE BLACK EAGLE." Since he had left the Holy Land he had received one more cognomen:—"THE UNKNOWN CRUSADER." And yet, with all these, he still remains without a Christian name. Even when all Palestine and half of Europe were filled with the song and story of his wondrous prowess, they could not tell his name, whence he came, nor where he belonged. Upon that point he had reserved a stern silence; and the most that the Emperor Baldwin could gain from him when he bestowed the honor of knighthood was a simple declaration to this effect:—

"Upon my name there rests no stain—in my soul there is no wrong. I can look up to our God and implore his protection, feeling that I am worthy of it; and into the face of any honest knight of Christendom I can look without a blush. Call me *Sir Knight of the Eagle*, and the name shall not be dishonored."

Baldwin had asked no more. With the memory of the youth's feats of noble daring fresh upon him he gave him the magic stroke of the imperial sword, and with his own hands did he buckle on the golden spur.

Behind the Unknown rode a second knight of nearly the same age with the former. He was not quite so tall, but full as broad-shouldered, and possessed a goodly share of manly beauty. In fact he was a noble, handsome-looking knight, and such an one as no mistress would have gazed upon but with gratitude and pride. His armor was of the same pattern as his companion's, but not of the same color. The casque was of burnished steel, the gorget of the same, and the rest of the armor—the cuirass, the tasses, the brassets and the cuiskes—of green and gold in color, though of good, well-tried steel in substance. He also wore a velvet cap upon his head, and carried across his saddle the surcoat of the Crusader. His name was ENGELBERT VON MARBURG, and he was known throughout the Holy Land as one of the bravest knights that ever couched a lance against the infidel Saracen. His weapons were the same as those carried by the Unknown, save that they were not quite as heavy.

Behind Sir Engelbert rode the two esquires. They were also well armed, and wore the brassets and cuiskes in addition to the cuirass. Robert von Swingenhoffen was forty years of age; short and heavily framed; with great bones and sinews, almost like an ox; a red face and red hair; and possessed of much ready wit. He had served under Baldwin as an esquire, and during said service had performed many valorous deeds. One day, at the taking of a fortified town, he became surrounded by half a dozen stout Moslems, and had given himself up as lost, and said his prayers, when the Knight of the Eagle burst in upon him, slew his enemies, and bore him away in safety. Baldwin saw the deed, and from that hour he gave Robert von Swingenhoffen to the Black Eagle, to serve him as best he could. And he had been faithful. He loved his valiant master, and was ready at any moment to lay down his life for the good of him who had once saved it.

The fourth person in the party was Bernard von Schafferhausen. He was some five years younger than Robert, and very unlike him in frame, being very tall—all of six feet and a half, and rather slim for such height. Yet he was strong, and overrunning with fun and good nature. That he was a faithful and brave esquire Sir Engelbert well knew, for he had served the noble knight several years.

The road by which the party thus travelled was one of the wildest in the country. The giant trees stood thickly about where the surface was not of rock, and upon all hands the rugged mountains arose like sentinels of the empire.

At times the path was through a dense wood—then over a rugged cliff—then along a deep ravine—and anon upon the narrow pass that girded some perpendicular wall of rock. At length they reached a wide wood, through which the road was level and broad, and here Sir Engelbert rode up to his companion's side.

"This reminds me of the days agone, Sir Mystery," the second knight said, as he drew in the rein.

"Then you remember these scenes," returned the Unknown, in a half sad, meditative manner. But as he raised his eyes and met the generous gaze of his companion, the sadness passed away, and a smile broke over his own face.

"Aye—I understand," he added. "I was buried in an old thought when you came up. Yes, yes—these mountains and forests have a strange power over the soul of him whose first breath was drawn amid their romantic fastnesses."

"Then you were born in this section?" said Sir Engelbert. quickly.

"I said not so, my friend," returned the other. "And yet I will tell thee that I was born amid mountains and forests. But you, perhaps, know this section?"

"Yes—well. I was just twenty when I took up the cross and followed my noble father to the Holy Land. That was nine years ago. And look back upon the story of those years." The knight's voice sank to a tone of sadness as he proceeded: "Look upon the record of those nine years. Ah—'tis writ in blood! There were six hundred brave men followed my noble father from his stout castle of Marburg. Where are they now? Alas! where are they? One after another—and sometimes score after score,—have I seen them fall before the fatal arms of Islam. I saw the last—the last save good Bernard and myself—fall at Antioch! Ah!—Marburg has paid well for Christianity in Palestine!"

"So she has, Engelbert—so she has. I can look back upon a fearful picture, though the tale of blood affects me not exactly as it does yourself. I had no kindred in the Holy Land—those who fell there were my brethren only in the holy cause of the Cross. Yet it is a sad picture. Look at the seas of Christian blood spilled upon those arid plains—and, for what?"

"For what?" repeated Engelbert, looking eagerly into his companion's face.

"I'll tell thee for what," cried the Black Eagle, impetuously: "For the purpose of——"

"Speak on."

"Never mind. Perhaps 'twere best unsaid."

"But you do not mistrust me, my dear Myth. A hundred crowns that my thoughts run with your own."

The Black Knight gazed into his companion's face for a few moments, and then he said,—

"Then here it is: These crusades have been evil from first to last. They have sapped Europe of her best hearts—snatched from her the noblest of all her knights; while in the Holy Land only jealousy, enmity, and petty revenge have marked the course of the legions of the Cross. Kings have struck hands with assassins against kings, and brother hath turned foe to brother. Had a tenth part of the labor and life and wealth been devoted to the good of our own country, what a glorious result might have followed. Ah, Engelbert, as the heat of the battle passes away, and the morning of youth's ambition wanes, how experience will whisper its heresy into the ear of reason."

"You have spoken my mind to the very letter," exclaimed Sir Engelbert.

"Then we are both heretics," rejoined the other with a faint smile.

"Perhaps some would think so, were they to hear us."

After this there was a silence of some moments, which was at length broken by Sir Engelbert.

"You still mean to continue on to Aix la Chapelle, do you not?" he asked.

"Perhaps so," responded his companion.

"Do you not remember, once in Constantinople, you told me when we reached Germany I might know your name, and who you were?"

"Yes," returned the Black Knight, "I do remember it; but the time is not yet come. I must first see how the wind blows. If I mistake not, this Rudolf von Hapsburg, whom the Pope has made Emperor, is a—a—mere puppet."

"I think so, too," added Marburg. "And so you still mean to remain *The Unknown*?"

"For the present I must."

"It's curious. Here we have been companions in arms for six long years—slept beneath the same tent—eaten from the same buckler when we had no plates—fought together, side by side, through a hundred bloody battles—nursed each other in sickness—and cheered each other in health,—and yet, when I am asked—'Who is your friend?' I can only say '*The Unknown.*'"

"And the thousand Musselmen, when they pass *Al Sirat*, and are asked by the recording angel who sent them thither, must give the same answer," returned he of the Eagle, with a smile.

"Aye—more than a thousand."

"Stop, good Marburg. By my faith, I take no pleasure in thinking how many of the poor fellows I have slain."

"Yes, Sir Unknown, the wondrous deeds of your arm have given you a name which you cannot hide so long as you wear the device upon your shield."

The Black Knight gazed upon the device, but he did not speak.

"Aye," resumed the other, "and I doubt if there be a man, woman, or talking child in all the empire who has not spoken your name."

"My name?"

"Of the Eagle, I mean."

"Ah—yes. Think you so?"

"I know it. Ah—folks do not tell you all, for they soon learn that you seek no flattery; but to me they talk more freely. Mind you, we have passed through a hundred German towns already."

"I know it, good Marburg."

"And not a soul have we yet seen who knew you not."

"Well, well. So be it, then. But, thank God, they know no more. No, Sir Engelbert, my secret has been most truly kept. On all this earth there lives not a soul who can call me by name save myself. Have I not been true?"

"In faith you have," answered he of Marburg; and then, after a while, he added,—

"I have been thinking of the last Moslem you slew. It does not trouble you to think of that?"

"Ah, no," the Black Knight uttered, with a glowing eye, while his hand instinctively sank to his sword-hilt with a nervous clutch. "It was at Carthage, when I struck down the three stout emirs who had surrounded Prince Philip of France. And see—here is his royal father's gift in token of his gratitude. "And as he spoke he placed his hand upon the richly jewelled gorget that hung upon his neck. "Ah," he continued, with a sad shake of the head, "Louis was a noble king; and when he died, a victim to the deadly vapors of the heathen land, France not only lost a true parent, but Christendom lost one of its best sons. He was one who went out from the promptings of religious duty, else he would never have undertaken his second crusade. However—the Pope made him a saint therefor, so he gained a spiritual elevation which a quiet rule at home could not have procured for him."

"Ha!" cried Sir Engelbert, just as the other ceased speaking, "look there."

The Unknown looked in the direction pointed out, and saw the turrets of a massive structure looming up against the darkened sky.

"What is it?" he asked.

"It is our good Convent of Saint Fulvia."

"A female establishment?"

"Yes—in part. There are some Benedictines there, I believe, who perform the out-door labor. By my faith, we are just in time, for see—the rain is already falling on the mountains."

"And are you sure they will give us welcome?" asked the Unknown, as he urged his horse on.

"How?" uttered Marburg, in surprise. "A convent, and offer the cold hand to Knights of the Holy Cross?"

"Perhaps I was wrong, but then you must remember that I have had little to do with affairs hereabouts."

"Aye—I understand, good Sir Mystery; but if you would pass for a German knight never ask again if a Crusader will find welcome in a German convent. Why, man, the meanest peasant may ask hospitality there."

After this the party spurred up, and reached the convent gates just as the great drops of rain began to fall.

CHAPTER II.

AGNES OF LUXEMBURG.

The Convent of St. Fulvia was situated within the precincts of Maulbroun, though some miles from any other habitation. It was upon a small piece of table land, where there were a few acres fit for cultivation; and this limited piece the Benedictines cultivated to so good a purpose, that the inhabitants of the building seldom had to go to any other market for fruits or vegetables.

Within the large ante-room of the convent sat a middle-aged woman, whose garb bespoke her to be the abbess, or lady superior of the place. She was not far from fifty; stout and rugged; and wore upon her face a look of deep piety and goodness of heart.

By the side of the abbess sat a maiden, who could not have seen more than nineteen years of life. She was of medium height; full and plump in form, with a skin of almost dazzling purity; her long, floating ringlets, of a deep, golden hue; and her eyes a mild, liquid blue. Her dress was far from being gaudy or showy, but yet it plainly bespoke her as one of gentle blood, and of noble family. Such was Agnes von Luxemburg, an orphan, and sole heiress to the broad estates of the late count, her father, who was an own brother of the abbess. And she was accounted the fairest maiden in Swabia, as she might well be, for surely no being of human mould could be more beautiful. It was not so much the faultless carving of her features, nor yet the voluptuous symmetry of her form, for the first was exceeded by the pure and joyous essence of her smiles, while the latter was over-balanced by the atmosphere of stern and lofty virtue that surrounded her like a halo. Few men had ever seen Agnes of Luxemburg without loving her; and at her feet had been laid half the estates of Swabia. But she had not yet looked with favor upon any of the aspirants, though that may be accounted for upon the fact that ere her father died he had expressed his wish that she should marry with the Count of Baden.

"Ah—there it comes," spoke the abbess, as the great drops of rain began to drive against the casements. "I knew it was near at hand; and our fire will not be out of place."

"No," returned Agnes, "for it is already cold and cheerless without. "I wonder if there are travellers among the mountains?"

"Very likely there may be. I suppose you are wondering if the Count of Baden will come for you?"

"No—no!" quickly uttered the maiden, with a shudder.

"Ah, Agnes—I have your secret. You love another."

"No, my mother, you are mistaken there." This was spoken in a tone which left no room for doubt, at least in the mind of one who knew the speaker.

"But you do not love the Count Rudolf?"

Agnes hung down her head, and for a moment there was a tremulousness upon her. At length she raised her eyes to her companion's face, and in a tone of affectionate frankness she said:

"You have spoken the truth, lady. I cannot love him."

"Nor could I," rejoined the abbess, emphatically. "Not only is the seal of repulsiveness set upon his face, but he is a bad man."

"You are right again, lady."

"Then of course you will not become his wife?"

"Oh—I know not what to do!" the maiden cried, resting her head upon her companion's shoulder, and throwing her arms about her neck.

"Then let me advise you," said the abbess, drawing the beautiful girl more closely to her bosom, and speaking in gentle tones: "You are young and handsome. Your father's wish is left upon record that you should marry with Rudolf von Baden—*when* you were ready to wed. I can appreciate your feelings, in having turned away the scores of noble knights that have knelt at your feet."

"I did not love them, mother—indeed I did not."

"But among them all may there not have been one whom you would have loved, had you not been bound by this plan of your father's?"

"I will not deny it."

"Then come and wed with our sisterhood."

The maiden started as though something had frightened her. The abbess saw the movement, and she quickly comprehended its meaning.

"Does it make you tremble?" she asked.

"Oh! I am not prepared to answer now. I am not fit for communion with your holy sisterhood."

"Then are there none on earth fit. Ah, Agnes, I fear your pride prompted that speech."

"My pride?"

"Yes, my child; for you must know that you are among the purest of our daughters."

"Well, well—let it pass now. I am not ready to answer such a question."

"And yet you know your father bade me to watch over you."

"Because you were his own sister, and he knew you loved me."

"Aye," added the abbess, imprinting a warm kiss upon the girl's fair brow as she spoke, "and he knew I should always love you. But—— Hark! What sound is that?"

In a few moments more the old porter appeared, and announced that two knights of the Cross and their esquires asked for shelter from the storm.

"Crusaders—are they?"

"They are."

"And did ye leave them at the gate?"

"I did."

"Out, thick-head, and lead them in quickly! Leave two knights of the Holy Cross in the storm with a shelter under their very eyes! Away—and lead them hither at once! and then see that their horses are cared for."

The porter retired, and then the abbess turned to Agnes.

"You will stay, my sweet child, and help me entertain the noble knights?"

"Certainly I will. Agnes of Luxemburg holds not her hands nor purse from the brave soldiers of the Cross." The maiden's eyes burned with a generous glow as she spoke, and upon her cheeks arose a rich flush of grateful emotion. Her father had made one crusade, and from his lips she had learned the fearful story of the dangers and privations which the devoted knights of the Cross had to suffer.

"Welcome, noble sirs, and God's blessing be upon you!" spoke the abbess, as she arose to greet the strangers.

"We thank thee, lady; and will pray Heaven to bless this house!" responded the Black Knight.

"And your esquires—where are they?"

"With the groom, lady. They will find welcome with the porter, I think."

"As you will. If they choose the porter's lodge, so be it."

"Ere Agnes was introduced, the abbess conducted her guests to an adjoining apartment, where they might lay aside their armor. When they had done this, their noble forms were shown to better advantage. The Unknown was habited in a garb of black velvet throughout, which, though it possessed a sombre look, yet gave to his form and feature a lofty dignity and grandeur. Sir Engelbert's garb was of a less grave character, though far from rich or gaudy. When they returned to the large sitting-room, even the abbess was startled by the strange beauty of her guests, but more particularly did she fasten her eyes upon the face of the Unknown; and it was not until he of Marburg spoke that she recollected herself.

"Your good convent was placed in the proper spot for us on this particular occasion," he said.

"So I hope it may ever be for the good of noble knights like you. This is the Convent of Saint Fulvia, and I am its abbess."

"And I am called Engelbert of Marburg. And," the crusader added, with a smile, "my companion you can only know as you see him. He is *The Knight of the Eagle.*"

"How!" cried the abbess, while Agnes started with mingled surprise and wonder: "The noble Knight of the Eagle?—He of whom we have heard so much?—The saviour of Baldwin, of Louis, of Brandenburg, and of even whole cities?"

"The same, lady."

"Hold," spoke the Unknown, with a faint smile. "Let me rest easy, I pray thee. Lay no more flattery upon me."

"If I do," replied the abbess quickly, "I'll beg thy pardon beforehand. But let me introduce my niece, Agnes of Luxemburg."

Sir Engelbert took the maiden's hand, and she smiled sweetly upon him as he greeted her Then the Black Knight approached, and his hand trembled as he extended it. Agnes gazed into his face, and the smile faded from her lips, and a tremor shook her frame. For the life of her, she could not tell whence came the quick emotion; only she felt the slight trembling of the Knight's hand, as her own rested within it, and she saw the sudden light that beamed in his deep blue eyes.

Supper was soon prepared, and, after the meal was over the party returned to the large room. The Unknown was the last one to be seated, and if he would sit near the cheerful fire, he must take the only empty stool, and that was close by Agnes. He took it, and ere long the Knights were recounting their adventures to the willing listeners.

As the evening advanced the Unknown turned his attention more particularly to Agnes, and with eager, generous looks, she listened to him. At her own request, he told her of his adventures, while his companion was conversing with the abbess.

"And now," said the maiden, after the knight had told her of his last exploit in Carthage, you must be cheered by the thought that you are soon to return to your friends."

"Friends?" repeated he, in a low, sad tone. "Ah—my friends are ——. But I wont say that. This reception tells me that I have friends. I will not believe that your generous hospitality is extended without some spark of friendship."

"Indeed, sir knight," uttered Agnes, speaking from her ardent impulse, and without thought, "you may be sure of that. My own poor life would be nobly given if 'twere to save and succor thee."

The Unknown started as these sweet words fell upon his ear, and for the moment the rich blood all left his face, and his heart seemed to have stopped its beating. But very soon the flood came rushing back, and the first bound of the heart gave a tremulousness to the whole frame.

"*I—I—mean, sir*——"

"Hold, lady," he said, as the fair girl attempted to modify what she saw she had spoken quickly and from the heart, "do not take back those words. They shall never leave me while life and reason last. They shall be with me to cheer and console me, and to give nerve to my arm, and strength to my heart. As true as God reigns, they are the sweetest words that have dropped upon my soul since my dying mother placed her thin hands upon my child head, and blessed me. Do not unsay them —— unless, indeed, they only came from a hope to please. But if they came from the heart, then let them be mine."

"I will be frank, sir knight," the fair girl returned, with a beaming, generous look. "Had they not sprung from the heart, you would never have heard them. The heart set them free ere the cooler judgment had weighed them."

"Thank you, lady; and henceforth you may rest assured that there is one knight who will protect the honor of your name with his life. And though, for the present, circumstances prevent me from revealing my name, yet you will believe me when I say, that no stain rests upon me."

Agnes bowed her head, and her whole frame trembled, but soon she recovered her composure, and once more her conversation was free and frank.

It was quite late when the party separated. An old monk was called, who conducted the knights to their chamber, and when they were left alone together they were silent for some minutes. Engelbert was the first to speak:

"By my knightly vows, Sir Mystery, I'll swear that thou hast captivated the heart of the heiress of Luxemburg."

"Cease thy foolery, Engelbert," returned the other, with a slight flush upon his cheek.

"Foolery, my brother? Do you think I am blind? Dost think mine ears and eyes have both lost their powers of conveying intelligence to the mind? Upon my faith, I never saw a maiden more pleased, nor one more happy in the society of mortal man. But what say you, Sir Benedict? Have the charms of the lady Agnes touched thy heart?"

"You jest, Engelbert."

"Upon my soul, I do not."

"She is lovely."

"And the abbess tells me she is as pure and good as she is lovely."

"Then the abbess knows her well?"

"Aye—the abbess is her own aunt."

"And I suppose the maiden is engaged."

"Not exactly. Her father, before he died, expressed the wish, or laid the plan—only the wish, I guess—that she should, when she got ready to marry, become the wife of the Count of Baden; but her aunt tells me she hates the count."

The Unknown turned to a window and gazed out into the gloom.

"What do you see out there?" his companion asked.

"Blackness and storm!" the stout knight returned. And when he looked once more upon his friend, his face was pale, and there had been a tear upon his cheek, for its wet course was still visible.

Engelbert knew that his companion had some heavy thought upon him, and he said no more upon the subject he had broached. They both knelt before the crucifix which stood within a niche in the wall, and having said their prayers, and reviewed the most sacred of their knightly vows, they retired.

Had the knight of the Eagle told the truth, he would have said that he loved the gentle Agnes of Luxemburg. He would have confessed that his heart had been that evening moved as it was never moved before. But he was not prepared to make such a confession as that.

And how was it with the maiden? Why did the good abbess gaze upon her so strangely, and shake her head so meaningly? It was because she saw very plainly that the heart of the beautiful girl had at length fallen into captivity.

"Come, come, my child," the loving aunt urged, after all other means of gaining her confession had failed,—"why fear to trust me? Would you not have one true friend in whose honor and love you can confide?"

"Yes—yes, aunt Agatha; and I will tell thee the truth. I do love him!"

"Noble, generous girl," cried the abbess, as she clasped the maiden to her bosom, "I knew I was not mistaken. But I wonder not. He is a gallant knight and a true man. His name is in every mouth, and a thousand songs tell his praise."

"Can you imagine who he is, aunt?" the maiden asked, gazing up with an eager look.

"No, my child. Or, at least, I can think of nothing touching the point to be spoken of now. But let that not trouble you. He is a true man—better than many whŏm good men honor; so rest easy on that score."

"Then you do not blame me? You will not betray me?" murmured Agnes, eagerly and hopefully.

"No, no, my love. Far from it. The hour may come when aunt Agatha will help thee."

"Bless thee! bless thee!" spoke the maiden as she clung to the neck of her friend, and wept in the exuberance of the first wild passion of her young heart.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROBBER KNIGHTS.

The two knights were aroused in the morning by a loud knocking at their door, and upon opening it they found the same monk there, who had shown them up on the night before.

"Noble sirs," the old man cried, "a party of the robber knights have come to rob the convent?"

"How?" uttered the Unknown. "Rob a nunnery? Rob the home of defenceless women?"

"Yes, noble sir. They are now at the gate and demand admittance."

"How many of them?"

"Full a score."

"Then hasten down and tell the good lady abbess that we will be quickly with her. By Saint Paul!" he continued, after the monk had gone, "is it possible that knighthood has come to this?"

"Ah," returned Engelbert, "some of these robber knights are bad men."

"Aye—I knew they'd rob a monastery; but a convent—a house of women—I had thought would be free from their avarice."

"Not if there be gold and silver in store."

"Never mind. But I am mistaken if the dastard crew shall not rue the morn that brought them hither!"

Ere long the two crusaders descended to the apartment where they had sat the evening before, and there they found not only the abbess and Agnes, but several other women who had not yet taken the full vow.

"How is this?" asked he of the Eagle, as he entered the room.

"Do you not hear that noise at our gates, sir?" the abbess returned. "That wicked knight, Otto von Metzinger, at the head of his companions, demands admittance here."

"But he does not surely mean to rob you?"

"Yes, sir. Ah—you know not the deep wickedness of these men. Yet there are few who would do this thing. That most bold and reckless man of them all—the Wild Knight of Wurtemberg—would never attack the home of women. He robs cities and wealthy monasteries. But this man stops at nothing. His vaults are already filled with gold, and yet he would rob us for more."

"Then you have valuables here?"

"Yes, sir—shrines of gold and silver, besides a large amount of money which we have collected."

"And have you any here who can bear arms?"

"Yes—a dozen or more; but they could do nothing against the well-armed knights."

"Let them be armed as best they can, and trust the rest to us." Thus speaking the mystic knight passed over to where Agnes stood, and, taking her hand, he said in a low, deep tone—

"Fear not, lady. Whilst I have life thou art safe."

Could he mistake the look she gave him then? Could that quick, holy, joyful expression have come from a heart that held no deep love? No. But mark that blanch spot that followed—that sudden show of fear. Why does she lay her fair, dimpled hand so nervously upon the stout knight's arm? Ah——

"But you—you, sir. Oh! you will not expose yourself. They are many—you are only two."

"Many in the wrong—and two in the right. God is with us. But be not alarmed for me. He who will rob a woman can hold no terror for me."

"Yet you will be careful."

"Oh—thy love plants the strength of a thousand souls in my bosom!"

As the knight thus spoke he raised the small white hand to his lips, and as he imprinted his first kiss thereon, Agnes of Luxemburg smiled.

Those were days when true men and maidens spent not long hours in senseless flirtation, nor tried to conceal the generous emotions of the heart. If the thought was right 'twas spoken. So from that hour the Knight of the Eagle knew that he was welcomed by the only maiden who had ever won his heart. The emotion was a strange one, and under its influence his heart grew light and joyous, and his arm stronger.

As soon as possible the two crusaders put on their armor, and then went out into the court where they found Robert and Bernard with the horses all caparisoned; and from the porter they learned that Von Metzinger was waiting an answer from him. But just as the porter spoke the voice of the robber knight was heard in loud and angry tones:

"Hallo! Within there, thou creeping porter. What is the answer of thy mistress? Will she give up the golden calves, or must we take them?"

"Oh, noble sirs," spoke the old porter, trembling from head to foot, "only last week, Sir Otto and his crew robbed the Convent of St. Mary, of Barbronn, carried off all the gold and silver, and killed four armed peasants who had come up to help to defend the place!"

"Say ye so? Then, i'faith, we'll send them off howling now. Where is there a loop-hole through which I can count the villains?"

The porter led the way to the small wicket in which there was a square piece of chain netting. Through this the Black Knight could count the robbers. There were two knights and fourteen men-at-arms—the latter on foot, and armed with cross-bows and swords, and wearing the usual armor of the foot-soldiers of the period—round shell-caps of iron with deep capes behind; cuirasses of brass, with a joint at the neck, thus supplying the place of a gorget; but no brassarts or cuiskes. They were stout-looking fellows, and from what our hero could see of their faces he would have judged them to be just fit for some such work. Sir Otto was a stout, powerful man, and as he now wore his visor up the crusader could see that he had a bold, bad look. The other knight, the porter said, was Sir John von Mainhardt; and that knight our crusaders knew had been placed under the ban of the empire for his evil deeds, but particularly for having robbed the Archbishop of Mayence.

"Call out your men," said the unknown, "and have them arranged in the court here to be ready for any who may chance to dodge in. Now, Sir Engelbert, we will out upon them, while Robert and Bernard follow to scatter the hirelings."

Thus speaking the Black Knight closed his visor, and having loosened his axe, and couched his lance, he called upon the porter to throw back the gate. As the way was thus opened, six of the men-at-arms were seen bringing up a heavy log with which they meant to batter down the wicket. The movement of Sir Otto and his companion, when they beheld this unexpected presence was one of astonishment; but ere they could betray much emotion our hero spoke:

"How now, Sir Knights—what would ye here?"

"Who are you that dares question Otto of Metzinger?" the robber retorted. "Raise thy visor that I may see thy face."

"Not to thee until I know thy business; and then only at my pleasure. I question thee by the right of a protector of this holy place. Now tell me thine errand. If thou seekest rest and refreshment, and need it, thou shalt find it."

"I do seek refreshment, meddler—such refreshment as kings and emperors live upon. Gold!—gold!"

"Then you have come to rob these women?"

"Call it as you please. I have come to remove that which cannot but keep the thoughts of these holy people dragging on the earth. If I relieve them of their gold and silver they'll have more time to pray. Is not that a Christian work? Ha, ha, ha. Thou hast thine answer. Now up with thy visor."

"Not to Otto von Metzinger, while the ban of the empire is upon him, and base robbery engages his soul. Foul, recreant knight, thou canst not pass these gates."

"Ho, ho! Sir Valiant—thou claimst the women for thine own, eh? Not pass in? Otto of Metzinger kept back by a faceless bravado? By the host, here's at thee! What ho, men-at-arms! Throttle those two clowns, while Sir John and myself unhorse these two aspiring nun-knights!"

"Beware, Sir Otto!" cried the Unknown as he grasped his lance more firmly and drew in the rein. "You are unharmed now in body, and if you will go away, and swear that you will not return upon this errand, you may go safe and sound. But if you persist in your foul scheme the consequences be upon your own head. You have warning enough. God defend the right!"

"Look ye, Sir Prater—the gate is open behind you. Just stand where you are and I'll ride thee down as I would a praying nun."

As Sir Otto spoke he gathered up his rein, and put spurs to his horse; and with his impious battle-cry of—"*the spoils to the mighty!* he dashed on.

"*God and St. Fulvia!*" shouted the Unknown, as he braced himself for the shock. He did not move from the place where he stood. He only bent a keen eye upon the robber, and set his lance for the guard. He felt the power of a giant in his good right arm, and full well he knew that the oncoming knight only rushed upon defeat. He had received too many charges to miss his mark now; and even his horse had been so thoroughly trained that a single word was sufficient for its guidance.

With a firm hand the Black Eagle held his lance, and as the robber came dashing upon him a quickly-spoken word caused his horse to leap upon one side, and at the same moment his lance, with a movement almost imperceptible, turned the point of the robber's weapon over the right shoulder, while the steel head of his own spear caught Sir Otto's helm just below the visor and rolled him from his horse upon the ground. Almost at the same moment Sir John von Mainhardt fell beneath the stroke of Engelbert.

The Uuknown leaped from his saddle, and placed his sword at the throat of the fallen knight.

"Now yield thee, recreant knight!"

"But to whom?" asked Otto, in struggling tones.

"To the *Black Eagle of Palestine!*" shouted our hero.

"*Mercy!*" gasped the vanquished man. "Why didn't you tell me so?"

"But do you yield?"

"Yes!"

"And if I spare thee, wilt thou give me thine oath that thou wilt not trouble this place again?"

"The terms are hard."

"But is not life valuable? Remember—I would kill thee as quickly as I would any other robber!"

"Spare me! I promise."

"Then upon thy knees and take the oath. That is the ordeal."

Sir Otto hesitated a while, but at length he got upon his knees, and with the cross of the crusader's sword before him, he took the prescribed oath.

"Well done! Sir Otto von Metzinger. Now call thy robber crew off, and go in search of some more legitimate game."

In the meantime the two esquires had been doing a heavy work among the men-at-arms. Robert of Swingenhoffen was like a wild bull among them, while Bernard stalked about like a stork among frogs. Their long experience against the Saracens had given them notions of combat of which their huddling adversaries knew nothing. Three of the robber-retainers were slain outright, while most of the others were either senseless upon the ground or crawling away with cracked and aching heads.

Sir John von Mainhardt, as soon as he knew who his captor was, readily took the same oath that his companion had taken, and then they were allowed to depart; though ere they did so the latter poured out his enmity and threats profusely.

"By the holy host, Sir Crusaders, you have ventured into a nest of hornets, as you shall find to your cost. If you get out of these mountains with a whole skin you'll be fortunate!"

With this threat upon his lips, the robber-knight turned to where his men-at-arms were searching for their senses, and ere long the whole party rode off—all save the three dead ones, their bodies being left for the monks to dispose of.

Blessings, deep and sincere, were showered upon the two crusaders when they returned to the convent; and when they heard of the oath they had made the marauders take, the abbess could not speak her gratitude.

A hearty breakfast was eaten, and after this the two knights signified their intention of departing. The storm of the previous evening had passed away, and the air of the spring morning was fresh and fragrant.

"Do you go near Stuttgart?" the abbess asked.

"Directly thither," the Black Knight answered.

"Then you will easily reach it before dark if your horses are strong."

"Certainly,"

"I have a favor to ask of thee," the abbess resumed, addressing him of the Eagle. "The Lady Agnes had been for several days watching for some friends who had promised to come and conduct her to Stuttgart, where she would go to see her cousins, Constance of Baden, and Blanche of Wurtemberg. They may not come for a long while, and if you will accept the charge I shall give her into thy keeping, for safe delivery at the castle of Everhard von Wurtemberg."

"*Everhard von Wurtemberg!* repeated the Black Eagle. "The Wild Knight of Swabia?"

"Yes, Sir Crusader. He is surely the wildest knight in all Christendom; and the most jealous of restraint. Even the Emperor he sets at defiance, and claims all mankind for his foes. He is a strange being, and a cousin of mine to boot. He stands at the head of the robber knights of the empire; but yet he is a brave man, and would scorn a mean action. He would lie down and die of starvation ere he would rob a woman; and his breast he would bare to the sword ere he would strike a foul blow. Be sure he will give thee a hearty welcome if you cross not his purpose. But wilt thou accept the charge?"

"Does the fair lady wish it?"

"She does."

"Then I accept the trust, and you may feel that you hold my life in pledge for her safety."

"I understand," returned the abbess, with a smile; and thus speaking she turned away.

Ere long Agnes von Luxemburg entered the keeping-room, all prepared for her journey; and both the knights started as they beheld her strange beauty when thus arrayed. Her riding-robe of purple velvet was bordered with gold, and the jaunty velvet cap, with its drooping ostrich plumes, cast a warm glow upon her face that was like a halo. She wore a small dagger in her girdle, and in her hand she carried a light whip. Her horse, a noble barb, with a mixture of the Arabian in its veins, manifested the utmost delight when he saw his mistress approach; and when she had been assisted to her saddle, the pleased animal capered about with unmistakable manifestations of joy.

"Now, mind you," said the abbess, once more addressing the Black Knight, "until you reach the castle of Everhard the Lady Agnes is my charge to you."

"Then the Wild Knight has some control over her," the Black Eagle said, in a tone so low that the maiden could not hear it.

A dark shade rested upon the face of the abbess, and a slight shudder passed through her frame as she replied—

"Yes—he is her guardian—made so by my brother in his last will. But I have authority now."

Once more our hero promised to watch well his charge, and then the abbess turned to her niece. There were a few sincere blessings—a kiss—a cheerful farewell—and then the party rode away.

Agnes of Luxemburg smiled as she caught the last glimpse of her aunt through the trees, and then, for awhile, a deep cloud settled upon her brow.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

BE GUARDED.

BY AUGUSTA MOORE.

What a frightful thing is misplaced confidence. There are few agonies so keen, so cruel, as are those of a heart—proud, sensitive, affectionate, which (misled by some glamour of the mind, or some mirage of the imagination,) has been won to open long-sealed chambers; to give forth confidences; to lay bare to sight things as sacred as a dead mother's sleep; as dear as the memory of her dying kiss; as jealously guarded as the life of one's first born and only child, only that in that unguarded and helpless hour it might be trodden down by the iron heel of scorn; or pierced through and through by the poisoned thorns of derision. This indeed, is *crucifixion;* and the suffering is intensified in proportion to what has been the fullness of our trust in the nobleness of the Judas that has betrayed us. One of the sweetest of all the thoughts of Heaven, is that no such thing as this can ever happen there.

Yonder, in our Father's House, where, clad in humanity such as no other of our kindred ever wore, walks our "Elder Brother," the man whose name is written on his hands and side, there will be no treachery given for love; no cold looks, or scornful words, will be suffered there, nor any bitter laughter.

Oh! blessed, holy Home! wherein the soul that knows not how to guard itself around with hedge, and wall, and moat; that has no skill with sharp-toothed porteullis to defend its gates, shall yet have safety.

Why *will* men torture men? How *can* they do it, when they know *so well* how sore a thing a wounded spirit is? and when they know that all are made of dust; that all have woes to bear; and that they all must *die?*

But man *will* torture man. The best of men—they that cry loudest of the nobleness of being pitiful, and having large compass of compassion, will yet strike *without mercy* if you, by any error, even though that error should be born of overmuch regard for them, fall into their power. And blows from *such* men come harder—a thousand fold—than any which a professed bruiser can deal. When you have seen a man swelling from excess of compassionate interest in his fellow-men; when you have heard him talk tenderly of them and their woes until his cheeks were wet with the tears drawn out by his own eloquence; when you have looked up to him as the climax of all that was manly, magnanimous, and deep feeling; and supposed his heart as quickly touched by the cry of helplessness, sorrow, or pain, as the heart of the mother is, how have you been shocked, and your faith in all human goodness and generosity shaken, when, at some sudden blowing away of the atmosphere through which you viewd him, he stood revealed to you like the hard, dark body of the sun, with all the warmth and beauty *outside* of, and *not touching*, his heart. *Truly*, it is *not* good to see too much of men—for there are few of them, if any, who will not sooner or later thrust into some sensitive spot in you, a barbed spear or dart. On the whole earth there is not so merciless a thing as man. God has indeed led him most tenderly, who has never discovered this to be true.

Even they, who have themselves been shot at "by the archers," and who have felt the arrow or the lead cleaving their own souls, will strike home with remorseless skill when their brother stumbles before them. In a herd of buffaloes there is no safety, unless you can keep up and run with them—stumble, and you are ground into the dust—a thousand hoofs go over you. In a pack of wolves the only chance of life is to remain unwounded. If an arrow or a bullet hit one, and he falls, his fellows at once devour him; and so it is with men. If you wish respect, or to be treated as an equal—shut up your heart; build up a wall; choke down all free impulses; admire nobody; love nobody—at least never let them know it if you do, unless you wish to be imposed upon, or scorned, or ridiculed. Walk through the world with frost in your eye, ice on your tongue, and with the north wind for your garment. Let nothing bubble up that really *is* feeling and tender, for that would only be the point at which the hooks, and claws, and beaks, and fangs of the world would all dart for exercise. Be covered with armor of proof, and defy the world. This is prudent, and will save you much mortification, disappointment and pain—but—is it *right?*

WHO WERE THEY?

Who were the first settlers of the "Western World?" Though no positive facts point them out, there are theories, not without weight of circumstantial evidence, that the "lost tribes" of Israel were the founders of the cities whose ruins strew Mexico and Central America—that, in fact, they were among the "oldest inhabitants" of our hemisphere. All the tribes of Indians bearing the strongest marks of Asiatic origin, are identified with the Israelites by the following religious rites:

> Their belief in one God. Their computation of time by their ceremonies of the new moon. Their division of the year into four seasons. Their erection of a temple, having an ark of the covenant, and also in their erection of altars. Their division of the nation into tribes, with a chief or general sachem at their head. Their laws of sacrifices, ablutions, marriages, ceremonies in war and peace, prohibition of eating certain things; traditions, history, character, appearance, affinity of the language to the Hebrew, and finally by that everlasting covenant of heirship exhibited in a perpetual transmission of its seal in the flesh—a custom only of late relinquished.

The Phœnicians (Canaanites) had discovered the continent five hundred years previous to the migration of the Israelites, and were, it is assumed, the builders of the pyramids of Mexico and Central America, Palenque, Cholula, Otumba, and Tlascala, and other cities of which the ruins now excite our astonishment; and were, also, the introducers of hyeroglyphics, planispheres, zodiacs, temples, military roads, viaducts and bridges, from models of Egypt, Tyre, Babylon, and Carthage. In the apocryphal book of Esdrass, of great antiquity, it is said:

> "Whereas, thou sawest another peaceable multitude: these are the ten tribes, which were carried away prisoners out of their own land, in the time of Osea, whom Psalmanazar, king of Assyria, led away captive, and he carries them over the waters, so they came into another land. They took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the *heathen*, and go into a further country, wherein never mankind dwelt, that they might there keep their statutes, which they never kept in their own land (Assyria) and there was a great way to go, namely a year and a half."

The theory based on this passage, is that the aforesaid tribes marched towards the north-east coast of Asia—some remaining in Tartary, while many went to China, where they are *known* to be sixteen hundred years, and are still numerous to this day. The main body crossed at Behrings Straits to our continent, the more rude and hardy keeping to the North, and the more cultivated passing down along the shores the of Pacific, through California to Mexico, Central America and Peru, where they met their ancient enemies, the Canaanites, whom, as once before, they dispossessed of their country. Furthermore, it is urged that they dwelt in California when the ships of Solomon made their three years voyages, and furnished the "gold of Ophir" to build the temple; also that they were the settlers and possessors of Mexico, Peru, and the whole continent, centuries prior to the advent of Chirst. William Penn, in writing of the Indians, said:

> "I found them with countenances like the Hebrew race. I consider these people under a dark night, yet they believe in God and immortality, without the aid of metaphysics. They reckon by moons—they offer their first ripe fruits—they have a kind of feast of tabernacles—they are said to lay their altars on twelve stones—they mourn a year, and observe the Mosaic law with regard to separation."

These facts, (certainly curious) with the opinions of McKenzie, Beltrame, Smith, Penn, Menassah Ben Israel, the Earl of Crawford, Lopez de Gamara, Acosta, Malvenda, Major Long, Budinot, Catlin and other eminent investigators, give at least a coloring of possibility to the theory that the "ten lost tribes" were the progenitors of the races and ideas found in the "New World" on its discovery by Columbus. No careful observer could have looked on the famous "Aztec children," without inwardly exclaiming, "these are surely dwindled offshoots of the Hebrew stock."

GERMAN BURIAL CUSTOM.

The German ceremonial of interment is complicated and minute, and all persons of high birth are expected to conform to it in every particular. Among the rites which precede burial is one which, trying as it cannot fail to prove to the principal actor, must, nevertheless, greatly tend to tranquillize the minds of the survivors. It is necessary that we should describe this. For four-and-twenty hours the corpse remains under the roof where the death has taken place, and while there all the affecting offices necessary to its final burial are performed. The time elapsed, it is carried to the cemetery, and laid in its winding-sheet, upon a bed in the inner apartment of a low stone-building. The solitary erection consists only of two rooms. That in which the body is deposited is called the Hall of Resurrection, and contains no other furniture than the bed itself and a bell-rope, the end of which is placed in the hands of the corpse. This cord is attached to a bell which rings in the next room, and which is thence called the Chamber of the Bell. Thus, should it occur that the friends of an individual may have been deceived and have mistaken lethargy for death, and that the patient should awake during the night (for the body must remain all night in this gloomy refuge), the slightest movement which he may make necessarily rings the bell, and he obtains instant help. It is customary for the nearest relative to keep this dreary watch; and, from a beautiful sentiment, which must almost tend to reconcile the watcher, to his ghostly task; he is fated to watch there alone, that it may be he who calls back the ebbing life, and that none may share in a joy so holy and so deep—a joy, moreover, so rare and unhoped for.

PRIMEVAL POETS.

It is probable the first poets were found at the altar, that they employed their talents in adorning and animating the worship of their gods: the spirit of poetry and religion reciprocally warmed each other, devotion inspired poetry, and poetry exalted devotion; the most sublime capacities were put to the most noble use; purity of will, and fineness of understanding, were not such strangers as they have been in latter ages, but were most frequently lodged in the same breast, and went, as it were, hand in hand to the glory of the world's great Ruler, and the benefit of mankind.

FREEDOM'S LAND.

BY C. D. STUART.

I love the land where Freedom dwells,
Though bleak its hills and bare its dells,
And wintry cold its skies;
There, fearing not the tyrant's rod,
Man wears the image of his God,
As when in Paradise.

The rudest rock and desert sand,
Grow fertile as a garden land,
If Freedom's soul is there;
She gives the earth a brighter green,
She lends the wave a fairer sheen—
Robes rock and desert bare.

There every man's of noble birth,
A God-made sovereign of the earth,
Within his own domain;
And kings may chafe, and priests may ban,
They cannot lord it over man,
Where Freedom breaks the chain.

I love the land where Freedom dwells,
The land of Washingtons and Tells,
Hofers and Bolivars;
The land whose flag goes waving bright,
To fling against oppression's night
The glow of Freedom's stars!

THE RECONCILIATION.

A STORY OF TWO PROUD HEARTS.

BY MARY W. STANLEY GIBSON.

CHAPTER I.

A mild May morning, fresh, and pleasant, and bright; the soft air full of the songs of happy birds; the wild flowers lifting up their heads in the sunshine; and the green leaves rustling and waving in the woods, as if they were whispering secrets to the gentle wind that stirred them.

It was a lovely day—a day to be happy in. And yet a saddened look was visible on the sweet face of Faith Egerton, as she left the door of her house, and went slowly down the graveled walk that led to the road gate.

Her home—the home of her husband and children—was a pretty brown stone cottage, overhung with vines, and surrounded by beds of fragrant flowers. Behind the house was a level and beautiful grove, in whose cool recesses she had often lain, as a child, and watched the flickering light and shade come down upon the ground. For the earliest years of Faith, as well as these later ones, had been spent in this quiet place. Here she had been born—here her kind mother had died—here she had lived with a dear and only brother—here she had married her first love, and seen his children springing up around her, and here she hoped to close her dying eyes, with all the old familiar scenes smiling in beauty around her.

She leaned upon the little gate, and looked wistfully up the road. She was waiting there for the coming of her best and earliest friend, and the sound of wheels made her start, and sent a color into her pale cheek that had long been a stranger there. A dusty stage-coach came whirling up beside the gate—stopped long enough for a lady to alight and give some orders respecting her luggage, and dashed away again. The new comer did not see Faith for a moment, so screened was she by the branches of a wild rose that grew beside the gate. She took off her travelling hat, exposing a broad high forehead, shaded by silky masses of black hair, a face well-featured, but grave and stern, and full of thought, and deep, dark eyes, whose glances were kind, and whose smile was beautiful.

How strange a contrast between these two women. The one fair-haired and soft-eyed, with a meek and quiet face, on whose features contentment and home happiness was most plainly stamped; the other dark, and proud, and self-sustained, with a look that said to the most careless observer, "Oh, I have suffered!" To one life had been a fair summer's day, with only now and then a light and happy cloud; to the other—ah, what to her, but a bleak and stormy winter, where everything she loved laid down, and shivered, and died? And yet they were of the same age—the same station in life—and side by side they had sat at school, and played at home, in the childhood that lay behind them!

The tears sprang unbidden to the eyes of Faith Egerton, as she saw the steadfast look with which the young girl regarded the scene around her. She lifted the latch of the gate, and stepped out beside her.

"Gertrude—Gertrude Alewynne—won't you speak to me?"

"Faith, dear Faith, is it you?"

They were clasped in each other's arms at once. Faith wept bitterly, but Gertrude was pale and calm, and smoothed the fair hair of her friend with a caressing gesture, such as one might use to soothe a little child.

"Come, Faith," she said at last, as if weary of her tears; "this is but a sorry welcome to give me after so long a journey. You know I never liked to see you cry."

"But you are so changed—so changed, Gertrude."

"Well, and if I am? It is six years since we met, dear Faith, and they have not been marked with rose leaves for me. You must not expect me to be quite the same at twenty-one as at fifteen. Life changes us all, you know."

"I know," answered Faith, sadly. "But I never knew it so well till now."

"Well, we will let that drop. And now are you not going to ask me in after my journey from London?"

"Pray, forgive me," said Faith, blushing at her inattention. "I will show you to your chamber myself. It has been ready for you all this week."

They went up the yard together. Two fair-haired children ran out to the door to meet them. The youngest, a boy of some two summers, held up his little hands to Miss Alewynne with a sunny smile. She stooped down and took him in her arms, and walked along through the hall with Faith.

"Are these your only ones?" she asked.

"Yes, and they are trouble enough for me," replied the mother, looking at the children with a fond smile that betrayed how little the "trouble" was felt.

Gertrude sighed.

"I don't know, Faith," she said, brokenly. "Every one calls me cold and proud; perhaps I am. But when I take a little innocent child into my arms, something stirs in my heart that nothing else can touch. I might have been a better and a happier woman, Faith, if I had married."

This time it was Faith that sighed.

"You know well what my favorite plan always was, Gertrude. If you had only married my brother——"

"Oh, Faith, spare me," was the half-laughing answer.

"But you would have loved him if you had only seen him," persisted Faith. "He is so noble, so generous, so handsome. He is only my half-brother, you know; but if he had been my own, I could not have loved him better."

By this time they had reached the room which had been fitted up for Gertrude.

"Why, you have made a little Paradise for me," she said, with a pleased smile, as she looked around the chamber. "I shall never want to leave you, Faith."

"So any pains of mine will keep you, I am content."

"But, Faith," said Miss Alewynne, detaining her friend as she was about to leave the room; "I never knew before that your paragon was only a half-brother. Your maiden name was Faith Anderson; pray what was his?"

"Walter Roscoe. He was the son of my step-mother. My own mother died when I was very young."

"What! what was his name?"

The tone was sharp and impatient, but the speaker's face was turned away from Faith.

"Walter Roscoe. My boy is named for him—Walter Roscoe Egerton."

The jewelled hand that had been playing with the child's soft curls, was drawn away as if a serpent had stung it, and Gertrude turned a white and rigid face toward her friend, as she put the boy down and pointed to the door.

"Gertrude, what ails you? Are you ill?" cried Faith, in terror. She caught the bell-rope in her hand, but Miss Alewynne grasped her arm firmly.

"Don't ring; I shall be better soon," she said, in a low voice. "And, Faith, for the sake of the old time when we were school girls together, say nothing of my illness to any one, and ask me no questions now. Leave me for a little while, and to-morrow I will tell you all."

Wondering and perplexed, Faith left the room with her children, and went down the stairs. Her husband met her in the hall, and stopped to speak to her.

"Has your friend arrived?" he asked.

"Yes, Alfred. Have you seen Walter?"

"I went to his office as you requested me to, my dear, and asked him to come up and dine. He consented, and was talking with me as usual, when I happened to mention Miss Alewynne's name. He started up and turned white—but here he comes, Faith, and you can see for yourself how strange he is."

He stopped speaking, and both turned towards the door as Walter Roscoe entered, pale and agitated.

"Faith, is it true? is she in this house?" he asked wildly.

"Miss Alewynne is here, Walter."

He struck his hand upon his forehead.

"Why was I not told that she was coming?"

"Don't look so angry, dear Walter," pleaded Faith. "I intended it as a pleasant surprise for you both."

He uttered an oath.

"Oh, Walter, don't! Don't swear, and before these little children, too!" cried Faith, bursting into tears. "You never did so before."

"It was only on account of your 'pleasant surprise,'" he answered, bitterly. "Don't ever try another, Faith. I have only come to say good-bye. The same house can never hold Gertrude——" he paused, and then added, as if with an effort, "Gertrude Alewynne and myself."

"But why, Walter?" asked Faith, clinging to him as he was turning away. "Have you ever met before?"

He looked at her with a strange smile.

"Yes, Faith. We met once too often."

"You knew Gertrude, and yet never spoke to me of her, when you knew how much I wished you to love each other," said Faith, reproachfully. "Oh, Walter, I always thought I had your confidence!"

"And so you have, Faith; so you have, except in this one thing," he said, kindly, softened by her evident distress. "And when she has left you, I will come back and tell you all."

"Not before?"

"Not before, Faith. Let me go now."

"Oh, Walter, I would almost give my life if I could only see you two happy together."

"Faith, Faith, how little you know of what you talk! That woman has embittered my life; she has destroyed my confidence in every human being; she has deceived, and betrayed, and disgraced me. And yet, I know, if I look but once upon her face, I should forgive her all; for I loved her, Faith. I loved her more than my life. I must not see her, sister. When she has left you, I will come back again—till then, farewell."

He kissed her fondly, shook hands with her husband, and patted the golden heads of the children, and was gone. The young husband and wife looked after him wistfully. A cloud seemed to have covered the bright spring sky, and the little parlor of the cottage seemed lonely and deserted when they entered it, because of the mystery, which might be guilt, that was even then sheltered within its peaceful walls.

CHAPTER II.

Walter Roscoe, turning away from his sister's home, thought sadly of the many days that must elapse before he entered it again. Of Gertrude he told himself again and again he would not think; and again and again her image came up before him, as he had seen her last.

"Have I not wronged her?" he thought, as he paced the floor of his office that evening. "Is it not possible she may be innocent, even though appearances were against her? Shall I see her once more? Pshaw! what a fool I am! Did I not see her there beside him? Did I not see his lips meet hers? If I asked for better proof than my own eyes have given me, I must be a madman. I will leave this place, and never come back till she has gone away."

He threw a few things into a valise, locked the writing-desk beside him, and stepping out into the street, valise in hand, shut up his office, and walked slowly up the street. The hotel where he boarded was at a long distance from the garden of his sister's house, and yet it was there he found himself after a hurried walk of some five minutes. He lifted the latch of the little gate and entered.

"It is the last time, Gertrude, that I shall be so weak," he murmured, as he looked up at the vine-curtained window, where a lamp was still burning. "The last time I shall be so near you! Oh! Gertrude, can you dream what you have done, or is your heart all marble?"

He buried his face in his hands, and wept like a child. The memory of the happy hours he had spent with her, came over him too strongly to be borne. He could only meet such remembrances with his tears.

When he looked up again, he was conscious of an unusual bustle in the house. Lights were moving hurriedly in several directions, and once or twice he caught a glimpse of his sister's figure, passing the window of Gertrude's room. What could it be? Was Gertrude ill?

His heart stood still at the thought. He could bear never to look upon her face again; but oh, the grave must not cover it from him! He sprang up the path, and was about to enter, when the door opened, and Alfred Egerton came out.

"You here, Walter?" he exclaimed, starting back, as the pale face of his brother met his eye. "Faith just told me to go for you, when I had summoned the doctor."

"The doctor!" said Walter, turning pale as he found his worst suspicions realized. "Who wants the doctor?"

"Miss Alewynne is very ill. She is threatened with a brain-fever, I think."

"Oh, my God!"

The unhappy man staggered, and caught at his brother's hand to steady himself. Alfred looked at him a moment, and then said soothingly—

"Walter, it will not do for me to stay here a moment. But go in and see Faith. She will comfort you."

He wrung his hand sympathizingly, and hurried away. Half blind with his unshed tears, the unhappy young man entered the house, and seeing his sister sitting at her writing desk in the parlor, sank down at her feet, and hid his face in her lap.

"Will she die, Faith?"

"I hope not, my poor Walter. But she is very ill," answered Faith, laying her hand upon his head. "Our own doctor is with her now, and Alfred has just gone for another."

"What are you doing?" he asked, looking up at the half-finished note before her.

"Writing to her brother to come to her."

"I did not know she had one, Faith."

"Oh, yes. I have never seen him, but she has sent me his picture once. You know," she added with a faint blush, "it was quite a dream with us when we were girls—that is—she wished me to marry her brother, and I wanted her to marry mine."

"I know—I know," said Walter, and an indefinable expression of pain flitted over his face.

"And so she sent me Edward's picture. Would you like to see it, Walter?"

"Yes."

She opened her writing-desk, and taking out a small inlaid case, gave it to him. He gave one startled glance at it—another—and the picture fell from his hands, and he uttered a loud cry.

"Oh, Gertrude! Oh, my poor wife!"

"Gertrude, your wife!" exclaimed his startled sister. "Oh, Walter, when will these mysteries cease?"

"Now—with this moment," he answered, rising and seating himself beside her. "You shall hear all—you deserve it. Faith, you have had your wish. For twelve months she has been my wife."

"Oh, Walter!"

"Don't interrupt me. I knew, long ago, what your wish was. But I wanted to judge of Gertrude for myself. I knew she thought you were my own sister, and she met me as Walter Roscoe, at a fashionable watering-place, without a suspicion of my identity. I found her all you had so often described. I followed her to her home, and she was still more lovely there. Still I did not make myself known as your brother. Perhaps I had a fancy for one of your 'pleasant surprises,' Faith."

"Oh, go on, dear Walter."

"I married her, Faith, and was looking forward to a happy meeting with you. It was the second evening of our marriage, and I had walked out with a friend to whom I wished to say good-bye. The moon had risen before I returned, and as I laid my hand upon the latch of the gate, I remember looking up, and thinking what a tranquilly beautiful aspect she wore, and how perfectly happy I was. Faith, I have looked at the moon many times since, but she never wears that lovely face for me now."

He paused and sighed. Faith kissed him tenderly and waited for the conclusion of the story.

"Well—it must all be told. I entered the house quietly, thinking to surprise Gertrude with a kiss, as she was watching for me. I found her—oh, Faith—I found her with her lips pressed to those of another, and her arm round his neck!"

Faith uttered an indignant cry.

"Brother, there must be some mistake here. Gertrude is good and pure. I know it."

"Thank you for saying so," he answered with a melancholy smile. "I know it, too, now—would to God I had known it then!"

"But what did you do, Walter?"

"What would any man do, Faith. I sprang upon him like a tiger—she threw herself between us. He was about to speak, but she cried out—'Not a word—not a word—if you love me!' Think of it, Faith! If he loved her! Was it not enough to madden me? I *was* mad, I believe. I cursed her bitterly—I called her wanton and unfaithful. She had listened in silence till then—then she turned very pale and looked at me. I can hear her saying now in a deep, low voice—'After that, I can never be more to you.' She turned away and took his arm. They left the room, and I—I let them go. Yes, Faith—I was too heart-broken to avenge myself. I was too deeply deceived to lift my hand even when my wife left the room with one I fully believed to be her paramour. From that night we have never met, and only two cold and brief letters have passed between us."

"Oh, Walter! This is what has changed her so!"

"Is she then changed?" he asked eagerly.

"She has grown cold, and hard, and proud—and she is sad—oh, little like the Gertrude of my school-days."

"She has been drinking of a bitter cup, and my hand held it to her lips. Now hear the rest, Faith. Half-an-hour ago I believed her guilty. But that fatal picture shows me the same face I saw on that accursed night. It was her brother."

"And she never told you so!"

"You little know Gertrude, I see. I wounded her in the tenderest spot. She is the soul of truth and honor; but if one should doubt her, wo be to him. And I—oh, what a fearful doubt was mine! I wronged her deeply, and she was far too proud to forgive me. Will she ever do it, Faith?"

"She will—she must!" cried Faith, earnestly. "It has been a terrible mistake, but let us trust that all will go well. I see it all now. Not till to-day did she know that you were my half-brother—not till to-day did she dream that Walter Roscoe and you were one. Oh, how much she must have suffered!"

A low knock came at the half-open door of the parlor and Alfred Egerton entered.

"I have been for the physician, Faith," he said hurriedly, "and both have seen her. I have the best of news for you. They say it is only the long and hurried journey, and great mental excitement that has prostrated her so. They have left her quite comfortable, and she has asked for you. Will you go up and see her while I sit with Walter?"

Faith grasped her husband's hand and looked up to him with beaming eyes.

"You were ever a messenger of glad tidings to me, Alfred, and now to reward you, you shall hear mine."

She related what she had already heard, in a few brief words, and then stealing her hand in his, asked—

"Now what is to be done?"

"I should say, my dear Faith, that the sooner those two are brought together the better," said Mr. Egerton, when his astonishment allowed him to speak.

"I knew you would say so. Walter, follow me, and Alfred, wait here; I will be back in a few moments."

They went quietly up the stairs together to Gertrude's room. Leaving Walter at the door, Faith entered, and went up to the bed-side. The young girl was lying half-asleep in bed. The traces of tears were on her cheeks, and a small gold locket lay open in her hand. A rapid glance assured Faith that it was her brother's picture, and she bent down and kissed her friend.

Gertrude started—looked up, and tried to hide the picture. But some second thought prompted her to lay it in Faith's hand, and say, with a sad smile—

"You see, I know him."

"Is that all, Gertrude?" said Faith, gently.

"All!" said the girl, springing up in bed, and tossing the black hair from her forehead. "Listen, Faith. I loved him more than any earthly thing—I married him, a year ago, though I never knew he was your brother till to-day. He held my very heart in his hand and crushed it to atoms. He had no faith in me—in me—who would not have wronged him for worlds. Oh, Faith, though he is your brother, he has made my life a weary thing to bear. Leave me—to-morrow I will tell you more—but now I am too weak."

She sank back upon her pillows and covered her face with her hands. Faith stole noiselessly away, and Walter entered and took her place. All was silent for a few moments. Then the girl asked, without looking up.

"Faith, are you there?"

It was a stronger arm than Faith's that was around her, and a moustached lip that kissed her hand. She looked up, in sudden bewilderment, and saw her husband bending over her with his blue eyes full of tears. The sudden joy was too much for her—and all her pride was swept away in a moment.

"Walter—it was my brother," she murmured.

"I know it, dearest—I know all. But can you ever forgive me, Gertrude?"

"Forgive!"

There was a beautiful smile upon her lip as she drew him nearer, and kissed him passionately. The estrangement of a year was all forgotten in that bewildering return of happiness. Faith wept silently, for joy, upon her husband's shoulder, in the little parlor below. And believe me, the angels in Heaven rejoiced to see so perfect and complete a reconciliation between those proud and loving hearts. For those who forgive are dear in the sight of Him who has forgiven!

HUMBUG.

BY CLARA SYDNEY.

"Well," said a returned Chinaman, after a visit of a few months, to the United States; and when he was questioned by his friends as to our peculiarities.

"Well—as all the Americans say, I must say that the most observable thing that I noticed among them, was their universal application of one name to all forms of business, and in fact, to almost every thing else. More than half the great men of the country, and full three-quarters of all their merchants, are called by the same name; I could never make out how they could tell them apart when they called them all Humbug. Their papers they say are humbug, and their books are humbug. Their religion and their politics are humbug—and many a time, as I passed along their streets and inquired what this man and that was doing, I was told that he was 'humbugging.' At first I thought I would try and discover what humbugging was. I didn't like to ask, as every little child seemed to understand perfectly what it was. I was unwilling to appear so very ignorant, especially as I so well understood the American language. The first man that I was told was humbugging, was, as I discovered, employed in cleaning men's and boys' teeth. Ah! thought I, that's it, I suppose—that's humbugging. But in a short time I was told that a man who stood at another corner, crying out something, with a loud voice, was also humbugging. On examining *his* employment, I discovered that he was mending dishes by sticking them together with a cement which he had in long sticks, on a stand before him. After being told the same thing about a dozen or so of persons trafficing in the open streets, I had about concluded that humbugging applied to out-of-door business, but that idea was soon upset by the discovery that multitudes of store-keepers, hotel keepers, ministers, lawyers, editors, show-men, ladies, and little children, were employed in the same thing. I was now obliged to ask for help to settle this mystery; but every question I put respecting it was greeted with shouts of laughter, and I soon concluded to express no more curiosity about the matter."

POISON.

Death from poison has become of late so frightfully frequent, that the public are now betraying a strong anxiety to know whether any practical means has been left unresorted to for its prevention, and certainly something should be done, if it can be done at all, to guard against the alarming repetition of such weekly and daily catastrophes. We believe it is pretty generally known, that with regard to three of the most potent and popular poisons, viz.: arsenic, opium, and prussic acid, much could be effected. Neither of these substances are of such indispensable necessity, either in the arts or domestic economy, as to render the interdicting of their indiscriminate sale, excepting to regular licensed medical practitioners or druggists, a matter of either hardship or unnecessary oppression. But, lest such an interference on the part of government should be thought harsh or imprudent, every chemist in town or country, who sells these medicines, has it in his power, by a very simple process, so to *exhibit* them—to render *their presence* so very manifest—as to make it nearly impossible they can be accidentally administered; and this applies in an especial manner to arsenic, without affecting its natural uses in the smallest degree. Add five grains of sulphate of iron (green vitriol), or sulphate of copper (blue vitriol), with ten grains of ferocyanide of potassium, to every drachm of arsenic sold in a druggist's shop; and the consequence would be, that on mixing the poison with any liquid whatever, it would directly turn blue, black, or red, and become an immediate object of suspicion to the party to whom it was presented; for, let it never be forgotten, it is the whiteness of arsenic which renders it so easily administered in gruel, tea, or any other kind of liquid food. We think this suggestion so valuable, that it cannot be too generally known; and we are not without the hope that it will be immediately adopted by every humane chemist in the United States.

BABIES, CHERUBS, AND IMPS.

BY MARY FORREST.

"A babe in a house is a well-spring of joy." *Sometimes*, Mr. Tupper. I have occasionally looked into a house with a babe in it—with two or three babies in it—that seemed more like Pandora's box, wide open, than a place of perennial blessedness. Indeed, when I have been told that the dear little creatures are dropped into our arms to bring us into especial communication with the angels, I have found myself wondering if the powers below did not occasionally thrust up a small emissary—a dusky imp in a white robe—on a similar principle. But this bit of heresy is merely speculative. Babies are, undoubtedly, a divinely-appointed institution. The ordeal of systematic torture to which they are indiscriminately subjected, as soon as they open their earthly eyes, is sufficient to transform them all into demons.

Imagine a group of cherubs, in a pre-existent state, reading the delectable programme of introductory life after transition:

Swathing bands, fastened with innumerable pins; volatile legs, under discipline in the decorous durance of trailing dimity; sharp knees, with a sharp trot in them; Sprew; Jaundice; Red Gum; Croup; Chicken-pox; Whooping-cough; Fits; Measles; Mumps; and TEETH; which are all these.

What a shaking of "ambrosial curls"—what a putting up of tremulous lips—what a vibration of little white wings, in startled protest! No wonder that the first demonstration upon this mundane sphere is a woeful wail, protracted, in some instances, until the stature of the child-spirit reaches the cold cloud of mystery floating above it, and hushes itself to await the issue.

I am inclined to think that we do not enough sympathize with these quandom cherubs, while their tender feet are pressing the sharp thorns in the opening-path of a new life.

A mother's love is holy, and tireless, and beautiful, like the watch of angels. A mother's sympathy extends to the finest fibre of a pang in the form she clasps. Her eyes see always a good and sufficient reason for the thousand petulencies and outbreaks which, to others, have all the seeming of a freakish perverseness. Through the dense folds of linen and flannel, her subtle sense detects the ugly pin-point excoriating the delicate cuticle of the screaming protestor; or, penetrating the denser intervenings of flesh, muscle and bone, discovers a host of internal disarrangements: pains under the remorseless swathing band—an incipient cold—indigestion and nausea—an ear-ache—(some wicked spirit of a straw has been

"Scratching the brain's coat of curd;")—

and when no one of these grievances wears a sufficient air of probability to serve the motherly purpose, there is always an inexhaustible and indisputable *dernier resort*—"Poor thing! it is teething!" and so she folds it closer to her warm breast, and shelters and balms it with her soft hand, and pours upon it the rich sunlight of her smile, while her tears glisten, like jewels, on the silken curls, and low down in her heart rises the perpetual prayer;—and these are the roses, and the aromas, and the dew-drops in the way.

But a mother's love cannot surround her helpless babeling. A skeptical paternal "pshaws" at such representations, and such a system of coddling, and adopts a most ungentle course of counteraction, in which he has the hearty co-operation of harum-scarum brothers, and hoydenish sisters, and maiden aunts, and bachelor uncles, and the great red-faced and red-handed nurse, who seems to think she is paid by the tret, and the jolt, and the wrench, instead of the month.

So a babe in a house is not always a well-spring of joy. As a target for the arrows of disease, it *must* kick and scream, and do battle with all its available ammunition. There is little or no space for the sparkling effervescence of its pure spirit-life. If it escape, by special interposition, the manifold ills of baby-flesh, it is then only a half-sheltered dove, clinging to its warm nestling-place, yet feeling, through all the chinks of paternal tenderness, more keenly by contrast, the bleak winds and driving storms of an outside existence, in which its feeble wings are soon to be unfurled.

A baby in a house should be well watched and guarded, that its cherub-nature be not utterly exhausted by disease, nor stifled with ligatures, nor pinched out by rude and curious fingers, nor snuffed out with ogres and bug-a-boos; that it go not forth a dolt, or an imp, instead of the fair-browed and beautiful image of its God.

"Suffer little children to come unto me."

QUESTIONS TO THE WISE.

"Love begets love," says the proverb. So it does, sometimes; and then again it *don't*.

Now, if any of the sage, shrewd, and enlightened readers of the NEW YORK LEDGER can resolve the difficulties of the following questions, it will be a deed well worthy of doing:

What is the reason some people like you, whether you will or not; and others do not like you, though you desire their good will never so earnestly?

What is the reason that many persons for whom you do not care one straw, are so strongly attached to you, that you cannot offend them (so that they will *stay* offended,) do what you will; while others, whose anger is to you more grevious than the thrust of a knife could be, are so easily and fatally offended?

Why is it that they whose friendly regard you yearn for with constant out-reachings, feel no answering emotions, and even, perhaps, conceive an aversion for you, and repel you more and more, the more you try to come near them?

Again, how *can* one, for whose manifestations of regard and affection you have made cold or cruel return, still love you, and though he can follow you afar off—still follow you, with longing and with prayers for your welfare?

All this is of the daily experience of life. *Why is it so?*

C. S.

COMMERCIAL VALUE OF INSECTS.

The importance of insects, commercially speaking, is scarcely ever thought of. Great Britain does not pay less than a million of dollars annually for the dried carcasses of the tiny insect the Cochineal; and another Indian insect, Gum Shellac, is of scarcely less pecuniary value. More than a million and a half of human beings derive their sole support from the culture and manufacture of silk; and the silk-worm alone creates an annual circulating medium of nearly two hundred millions of dollars. Half a million of dollars is annually spent in England alone for foreign honey; and at least 10,000 hundred weight of wax is imported into that country every year. Then there are the gall nuts of commerce, used for dyeing and making ink, &c.; while the cantharides or Spanish-fly is an absolute indispensable in materia medica.

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ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

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Our only terms.—Single copies, $2 per annum; two copies, $3; four copies, $6; eight copies, $12; Postmasters and others who get up clubs can afterwards add single copies at $1,50. The party who sends us $12 for a club of eight copies, (all sent at one time,) will be entitled to a copy *free*. It will be useless for parties to write us insisting on our taking large clubs at lower rates. An elegant family paper like the Ledger, (containing no advertisements,) cannot be afforded at less than these terms. We do not want any clubs formed in towns where there are news-offices established. Terms, invariably in advance. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year.

Post-Office Stamps.—We are overrun withfive, ten, and twelve cent stamps, and will not receive any more of them for subscriptions to the Ledger. We do not object to taking a few *three* cent stamps occasionally, (to make change,) although we look upon them as a nuisance, as it is difficult to sell them. It is a mistaken idea that the Post-Office will buy or redeem stamps of any kind. We will sell $200 worth of ten cent stamps *cheap!* Who will sustain Uncle Sam's credit?

No Travelling Agents.—We employ no travelling agents. If any party pretends hereafter to act as such you can put him down as a swindler. The best way to get our paper is at the book and periodical stores; but if you happen not to be within reach of one, then you can send us two dollars, and we will mail it to you.

We will be responsible for all monies sent us in registered letters, and not otherwise. It costs but *five cents* to get a letter registered at any post-office—and this *insures* the party sending money against loss.

Rejected Manuscripts.—We will not return rejected manuscripts.

COLD VICTUALS!

Mr. Cobb's New Story, which we commence this week, is one of the most beautiful and enchanting productions that ever emanated from his popular pen. Mr. Cobb, as we have repeatedly stated, now writes *only* for the Ledger; but so great is his popularity that a Pennsylvania daily paper, and one other concern, seeing they cannot get any of his new tales are publishing some of his *old* ones. We do not blame them;—starving men very seldom stand upon ceremony—if they cannot sit down on an equality at the table, they *will* "grab" at the *cold victuals!* Such is poor human nature the world over.

SPRING SPIRITS.

Dull of sight and sense must be the soul that can perceive no divine and beautiful spirits in the atmosphere of a Spring morning. The Universe is full of spirits; everywhere is Spirit-land, in Spring time. Life gushes and love glows, not only in visible forms, but in the invisible of nature, above and around us. Let us go for a moment from the fevered mart, and see and hear if there be no spirits abroad. Bright and radiant spirits of air, winged with the golden flashes of the sun, and melodious with the sweet breath of heaven! Spirits of earth, unfolding in myriad blossoms, in reviving verdure, in bird-songs, in the lifting of the leaves by soft, balmy winds, and in the upshooting of life where the plough has stirred the ground, and the hand of man scattered the seed of harvests. Spirits of all waters; solemnly moaning seas, rushing rivers, silvery-sounding brooks, and still springs, that sparkle under the eye of noon like calm hearts thrilled with serene joy.

At least the Spirit of God is everywhere, loving and blessed. And if angels walk not abroad in the beauty and aroma of Spring, then is the sweetest faith, the purest fancy, and the divinest dream of the human heart, since the world began, a withering cheat. Can man behold and comprehend himself—a felt, but invisible spirit, enfolded in human form—and doubt that in all forms are subtile and mighty spirits, some unfolding to the eye, some to the ear, and some to the heart, but all benign and beautiful in their native guise, and all adapted to high and holy purposes. Who informs the flower with fragrance, and gives it a voice by the way-side as in the bower?—surely not the visible flower's self. There is a spirit in the flower; a spirit fraught with so much of heaven, that we bind it on the brow of death, to companion, as it were, with its odor and bloom, the soul plucked from its earth-stem. And so all the Spring-day fields blossom with spirits; foot-prints of angels, bearing the bounty, the blessing, and the love of God, and strewing them lavishly in the mortal paths of men.

Beautiful Spring-spirits; ye that held us in childhood, dallying with delight under azure skies, in flower-fields, and by the shores of bright waters; in blessed reveries, uplifting us beyond the clouds, when the sunbeams streamed through the May morning, or lay athwart the skies in gold-mist, at morn; in day and night dreams, peopled with passionate longings and divine joys. Oh, Spirits! gentle, and pure, and lovely, as all God's ministers and messengers are, be with us, and with Nature evermore, until the Creator of us all shall remove these masks of form and sense, and commingle us, face to face.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

We never pass along the streets, at the hours when the children are let out from school, without being reminded, by the feeble frames and dull eyes of many of these precious little ones, of the immense importance of this subject, and of our settled purpose to cause the Ledger, as it finds its way into thousands of their homes, to cry aloud and spare not, until parents and teachers have become thoroughly awakened to its urgency.

Apart from the diseases of the body which must follow the neglect of physical education so common, it is folly to anticipate true mental culture while it prevails. *There can be no sound mind without a sound body.*

We are not now speaking of the children of the poor, the nature of whose surroundings—their scant fare and ill-ventilated homes—is also a theme calling for frequent attention. We allude to the children of all classes, and especially with reference to their management at school.

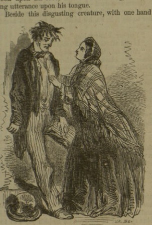
We need to go back a little, and learn of the ancients on this head. They made their gymnasiums and their athletic games matters of public concern. So should we, in our schools at least, do the same. And we should do everything else that may be needed to develope bone and muscle and *strength of cerebral fibre*, in our children, and so cultivate not one department of their nature at the expense of another, but the *whole*.

A CONTEST FOR A SOUL.

"Come home with me, Richard! Oh, *do* come!" said a soft, sweet voice, as we passed an open entry-way on Ann street, a few evenings since. We involuntarily turned and looked into the dark hall, and, although twilight was fast wrapping the place in gloom, we plainly saw the scene transpiring within.

Leaning against the wall, with one foot resting on the second step of the stairs that led above, stood a stout, healthy, drunken man, some twenty-five years of age, and who, when sober, must have exhibited a respectable, well-to-do appearance. Now, however, his eyes were bloodshot, his body and limbs limp and loose, and his whole frame ricketty; his cravat untied, and his hat lying crumpled on the floor at his feet; a silly, inebriate look upon his face, and a stammering, slobbering utterance upon his tongue.

Beside this disgusting creature, with one hand laid upon his arm, and her face turned beseechingly to his, stood a beautiful young woman—his wife, apparently—who was plainly, but neatly, and even tastefully clad,—with an expression of intense grief and mortification on her sweet, sad face, which was rendered still more painful to the beholder by the solicitude and love for her husband which shone through all else. She it was who, in tones of unspeakable agony and entreaty, wailed out from her loving, suffering, affrighted heart—

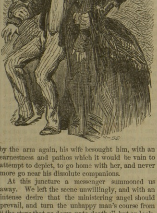


"Come home with me. Richard! Oh, *do* come!"

After some maudlin attempts at opposition, her husband seemed about to yield, when a ruffianly-looking man came up, and slapping him on the shoulder, said—

"Come, Dick! We're all a-waitin' for you. We're goin' to have a jolly time; and you must come along quick, old feller, ef you want a chance in."

At this familiar summons, the half-intoxicated man started up, and telling his wife she "had better go home, and take care of the children," began to stagger away with his tempter. Catching him by the arm again, his wife besought him, with an earnestness and pathos which it would be vain to attempt to depict, to go home with her, and never more go near his dissolute companions.



At this juncture a messenger summoned us away. We left the scene unwillingly, and with an intense desire that the ministering angel should prevail, and turn the unhappy man's course from "the steps that go down unto death;" but on looking back, as we turned the corner of Nassau street, we saw Richard staggering away with his ruffianly companion, and the wretched wife clinging to his arm in an attitude of despair, and vainly trying to win him back to home and happiness. Such is one of the many touching scenes of humble life that we witness in New-York!

"SEMPER PARATUS."

Significant is the meaning of this familiar motto, which is, literally "always ready." It is sometimes appropriately inserted on the signs of restaurants, and other places of business where promptitude is a desideratum.

In the young especially we find a marked difference as to promptitude. One child will do a thing while another is getting ready to do it. If parent, or teacher, says do this or do that, the one answers "Yes, in a minute." The other, perhaps, says nothing but makes the required act speak. The one must stand a minute, or turn round two or three times, or ask a useless question or two, before starting on an errand, for example. The other springs to the work, or starts on the errand, in a second—and the thing is *done*. "Can't" is a great word with the one class. If the other dealt in words, instead of deeds, *can* would be the word. They would utter the sentiment, if not the words, of "*semper paratus*"—for *they* are "always ready."

It is in childhood that the foundation of the opposite habit to that we are commending is oftenest laid. And, once acquired, it sticks to its victim like the fabled shirt of old to the wearer's back. If a public man, and called upon to make a speech, he will take as much time in his introduction as the prompt man will consume in his entire speech. Put him to preside at a meeting, and a dull, protracted meeting is inevitable. Put him in the lead, or at the head, of any enterprize, and he will be sure to paralyze the "go-aheadativeness" of a score of better men associated with him.

Oh! we do *love* to see promptitude. It is a most desirable trait in all conditions of life. And there is no motto more appropriate, especially in our go-ahead age, than "*semper paratus!*"

Never despise humble services; when large ships run aground, little boats may pull them off.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1856, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

THE CHERUB IN THE OMNIBUS.

They stepped in together—the man and his wife—honest, healthy country-folk. She—rosy and plump; he—stalwart, broad-chested and strong-limbed, as God intended man and woman to be. I might not have noticed them particularly, but they had a baby; and such a baby! None of your flabby city abortions; but a flesh-and-blood baby—a baby to make one's mouth water—aye, and *eyes, too!* Such a baby as might have been born in the Garden of Eden, had the serpent never crept in; born of parents fed on strawberries and pomegranates—pure in soul—pure in body—and healthy and vigorous as purity *alone* can be.

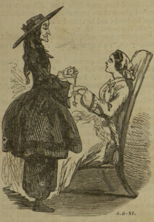
Such a baby! such eyes—such a skin—such bewildering lips—such a heaven-born smile; my eyes overflowed as I looked at it. I was not worthy to hold that baby, but my heart yearned for it, and I held out my hands invitingly.

See! the little trusting thing leaps from its father's arms and sits smiling on my knee. Ah! little baby, turn away those soft blue eyes from mine; is it not enough that my soul is on its knees to you? Is it not enough, that for every bitter word wrung from my tortured soul by wrong and suffering I could cry—God be merciful to me a sinner?

And yet, little baby, I was once like thee. Like thee, I stretched out the trusting hand to those who—— ah, little baby—I am not like thee now; yet stay with me, and perhaps I shall be. Jesus "took a little child and set him in the midst." Take hold of my hand, and lead me to Heaven.

Going? then God be with thee, as surely as he has been with me, in thy pure presence. I shall see thee again, little baby, if I heed thy teachings; thou hast done thy silent mission. Fanny Fern.

LADY DOCTORS.



And so the female Doctors are prospering and getting practice. I am sure I am heartily glad of it, for several reasons; one of which is, that it is an honest, and honorable deliverance from the everlasting, non-remunerating, consumptive-provoking, monotonous needle. Another is, that it is a more excellent way of support, than by the mercenary and un-retraceable road, through the church-door to the altar, into which so many non-reliant women are driven. Having said this I feel at liberty to remark that we all have our little fancies, and one of mine is, that a hat is a pleasanter object of contemplation in a sick room than a bonnet. I think, too, that my wrist reposes more comfortably in a big hand than a little one, and if my mouth is to be inspected I prefer submitting it to a beard than to a flounce. Still—this may be a narrow prejudice, I dare say it is, but like most of my prejudices I am afraid no amount of fire will burn it out of me.

A female Doctor. Great Esculapius! Before swallowing her pills, (of which she would be the first!) I should want to make sure, that I had never come between her and a lover, or a new bonnet, or been the innocent recipient of a gracious smile from her husband. If I desired her undivided attention to my case I should first remove the looking-glass, and if a consultation seemed advisable, I should wish to arm myself with a grid-iron, or a darning-needle, or some other appropriate weapon before expressing such a wish. If my female Doctor recommended a blister on my head, I should strongly doubt its necessity if my hair happened to be handsome, also the expediency of a scar-defacing plaster for my neck, if it happened to be plump and white. Still, these may be little prejudices; very like they are; but this I will say: before the breath is taken out of me by any female Doctor, that while I am in my senses I will never exchange my gentlemanly, soft-voiced, soft-stepping, experienced, intelligent, handsome Doctor for all the female M. Ds. who ever carved up dead bodies or live characters—or tore each other's caps.

Fanny Fern.

A WONDROUS WONDER.

What wondrous wonder God has wrought
In me, his puny creature,
To shut the stars up in my thought,
And clothe with love my nature.

My life, from his a little spark,
Which I must keep so purely,
That it shall through the final dark
Burn steadfastly and surely.
Alice Cary.

HINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

It seems that one of the greatest pests of Mr. Buchanan's life is the constant annoyance to which he is subjected by the pertinacious solicitations of office-seekers. These vermin swarm in every nook and corner of Washington; and so watchful are they, that the President cannot so much as show himself anywhere at any time, without being surrounded by them and having their "papers" thrust in his face. For the purpose of relieving our Chief Magistrate from this dilemma we would suggest to him that he issue the following decree:

First, No man will be appointed to office while he is away from home. Secondly, No man will be appointed to office who solicits a place for himself or for anybody else. Thirdly, No man will be appointed to office for whom any person solicits a place.

By issuing such a brief document, the President would at once relieve himself of the incomputable pests that now annoy him, and get time to read his Ledger in peace.

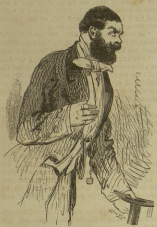
Real difficulties are the best cure of imaginary ones: because God helps us in the real ones, and so makes us ashamed of the other.

METALLIC AND HUMAN CURRENCY.

Congress has done the country some service by passing a law for the withdrawing of Spanish coin from circulation. Mexican quarters, shillings and sixpences are a nuisance; but thanks to "*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*" we shall soon get rid of them.

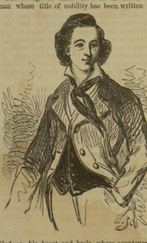
We are thankful for one good example from "the powers that be," and, like good citizens, shall attempt to follow it. Let us have another: Let our citizens, by "virtue of their own authority," enact that counterfeit noblemen and bogus patriots, who have been as common in American cities as Spanish coins or bad bills, be excluded from respectable society. Congress has put an end to the swindling practiced by the petty merchants who retailed goods by shillings and sixpences. We propose to remove as great an evil by excluding foreign counts of doubtful reputation, and foreign patriots of no reputation, from the society of our sisters, our daughters, and our wives.

"Know all women by these presents" that the following commodity is not genuine—He calls himself a distinguished foreign nobleman, travelling for pleasure or the benefit of his health; or a persecuted refugee; or a poor patriot in exile. He is whiskered, moustached, perfumed. He wears a title, a dozen decorations, breast-pins, rings, and a Roman nose. He has travelled all over the Continent, and the most celebrated persons of Europe have the honor of being his acquaintances. His occupation in the United States is to be a gentleman, to sigh tenderly, to look melancholy or gay, as his face inclines to tragedy or comedy, to lisp small oaths gracefully, to sing foreign songs pathetically, gutterally, and basely, to lie pathetically and bravely of his own hair-breadth escapes and terrible sufferings, and always to turn the sympathies of our would-be aristocracy into hard cash. He sometimes plays the part of a poor exile. In this character he accepts anything, and has no objections to a rich merchant's daughter or wife, or to a smooth sixpence. Again, he is a wealthy foreign nobleman. In this character he has the distinguished honor of lodging a bullet or a stiletto in your body if you step "between the wind and his nobility." Nobleman is written all over him. His *distingue* appearance, and noble bearing, are a label on which is written, "I am that illustrious foreign Count ———, in whose veins runs no drop of plebeian blood." He is always a gentleman, and wears "his honor" as a badge on his coat, not to be looked at without a bow. In deportment, he is a model like Mr. Turveydrop, senior; and then he walks with such an air, in this style:



"And the proud tailor went prancing away."

But enough of this. Give us as friend the man whose title of nobility has been written by God on his heart and brain, whose countenance bears the impress of calm thought, high aims, pure and tender feeling—who speaks the truth boldly, but kindly, and at the proper moment—whose hand, whether soft as a queen's or hardened by manual labor, always bears a healing sympathy in its touch—and whose eye, whether dim with age or sparkling with youth, never fails for an instant to cast on every one and everything around him the divine light of love. Natural ability, an unspotted moral character, and a good education—these are pure, coined gold to us, and the only human currency which should be recognized in the United States.



MURDER.

The papers teem with accounts of murders in all directions. "Boy shot in the Bowery;" "A woman's throat cut in Cherry-street;" "A child killed in Washington-street;" "A man stabbed in a lager bier saloon;" "A woman murdered in South Brooklyn." Such captions as these, and others more horrible, stare at us constantly from the columns of daily papers, excite a momentary thrill of horror, and pass into oblivion. The trouble is, there is too little hanging done now-a-days. Men murder without fear of retributive punishment. The rigor of public sentiment has become so relaxed and debauched by humbug philanthropy, that a tip-top murderer is about as apt to be regarded with sympathy as with abhorrence. Instead of being treated as a criminal he is too often treated as a first-class lion, and made much of. This will never do. The good old orthodox and most merciful institution of hanging must be put in vigorous operation once more.

CURRENT ITEMS.

The Tuscaloosa Clarion mentions an attack made upon a dog of the mastiff and Newfoundland breeds, by a huge serpent of the anaconda species. The owner of the dog was out hunting with him. He heard a crashing among the bushes, followed by a fierce growl from his dog, and then a noise as of a violent struggle. Hastening to the spot he found the dog in the coils of the snake, and evidently getting the worst of it. As soon as he could fire, without injuring his four-footed companion, he did so, and luckily lodging the charge of his gun in the serpent's head, so disabled him that he was soon despatched. He measured twelve feet in length. The dog, though tightly squeezed, was not seriously injured.

In the town of Benton, Indiana, a man named Blake a short time since became incensed at a worthless fellow, who was hanging around his wagon-shop, and, seizing a broad axe, he rushed out and dealt the intruder a blow which nearly severed his body in two. The people of the town became intensely excited when the fact became known, and Blake was taken into custody.

A gentleman in Brooklyn, whose house was overrun with rats, called in some friends, and with them "had a few days' sport" in shooting the vermin. A great many rats were slain, the stench of which became quite overpowering, (although they were speedily removed,) and a little son of the gentleman, some four years old, became so affected by it that he sickened and died.

A child was made ill a few days since, in Jersey City, by eating maple sugar. The physician considered it a case of semi-poisoning, although the phenomena were too impalpable to base any very reliable opinions upon. Parents would do well to be a little careful how they allow their children to eat too much maple sugar purchased at random.

A writer in the Springfield (Ill.,) Republican says that a contract has just been concluded for 100,000 bushels of oats, to be delivered on board steamboats at St. Louis, for Mexico, at sixty-five cents a bushel, making $65,000. Young men who have "wild oats" on hand had better send them to the Mexican market.

It seemed as though house-rents must have reached their maximum in this city and vicinity a year ago, but they are higher than ever this season. Miserable old shells of houses now rent for $500, which a few years since would not have commanded over a fifth of that sum.

The Cassville (Ga.) Standard says there is now living in Murray Co., Ga., a revolutionary veteran, named John Hames, who has attained the extraordinary age of one hundred and thirty-four years. He was ten years old when Washington cut his first tooth.

The Ottoman Government has authorized the construction of a railroad, by a company of British capitalists, from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. It will be continued on to British India, a distance of 4,000 miles. A stupendous project, truly.

A singular legal case has just been decided in Cincinnati. The defendant, fifteen years ago, found an infant upon his door steps, and left it at a humane institution. He is now compelled to pay $150 a year for its support ever since.

As Mr. Elisha Trice, a gentleman living in Dorchester, Maryland, was pulling down a large chimney attached to a house of his undergoing repairs, the whole mass of brick suddenly come crashing down, and killed him instantly.

There are said to be over ten thousand office-seekers in Washington. Hotel and boarding-house keepers are reaping a rich harvest, and it is almost impossible to keep a sufficient supply of liquor and cigars on hand.

It is stated by Western papers that three "pork operators" cleared $650,000 last season, and that many others made enormous profits. Those fellows must have "gone the whole hog" in their operations.

By last accounts Constantinople had been laid in ashes—only seven houses left standing. The Constantinople referred to is out West, and contained but nine houses before the conflagration occurred.

There is great excitement in Paris on account of a prophecy by a Dr. Cummings, that on the 18th of next June a comet is going to knock this world into the middle of chaos, &c., &c.

The dwelling of Mr. James Taylor, near Houston, Indiana, recently took fire at night, while Mr. T. was absent, and burned down, consuming Mrs. Taylor and three children.

New York and vicinity consumes annually about four hundred thousand tons of ice, which, at twenty-five cents a hundred weight (the usual price), amounts to $2,000,000 per annum.

The journeymen carpenters of this city are trying to get their wages raised to $2 a day. Bosses are now paying twelve, fourteen, and fifteen shillings.

A chemist in Paris, after a long series of experiments, has demonstrated that brown or Graham bread is less nutritive and healthy than white bread.

An old lady recently died in Actopan, in Mexico, aged 139 years

WIT AND HUMOR.

"'Taint Like."—A certain lawyer had his portrait taken in his favorite attitude—standing with his hand in his pocket. His friends and clients all went to see it, and everybody exclaimed, "Oh, how like! it's the very picture of him!" An old farmer only dissented. "'Taint like!" exclaimed everybody, "just show us wherein 'taint like?" "'Taint—no 'taint," responded the farmer; "don't you see he has got his hand in his own pocket? 'Twould be as like again if he had it in somebody else's."

A seaman having his leg shattered by a ball during an engagement, underwent amputation with the greatest indifference to pain. When the limb was off, it was of course immediately thrown overboard, upon which Jack called out to the man who had performed the last office for his departed leg: "I'll complain of you to the captain. Although you were ordered to throw my leg overboard, you had no right to throw my shoe with it!"

A Hint in Season.—At a banquet when solving enigmas was one of the diversions, Alexander said to his courtiers: "What is that which did not come last year, has not come this year, and will not come next year? A distressed officer, starting up, said: "It certainly must be our arrears of pay." The king was so diverted, that he commanded him to be paid up, and also increased his salary.

"My son, what did you bite your brother for? Now I shall have to whip you. Don't you remember the 'Golden Rule' I taught you? If you wouldn't like to have your brother bite *you*, you shouldn't bite *him*." "Ho, mother—get out with your whipping! Remember the 'Golden Rule' yourself. If you wouldn't like me to whip *you*, 'taint right for you to whip *me*!"

Discovery for the Nerves.—Persons, especially fine ladies, who, in consequence of inactive or sedentary habits, the too frequent use of close carriages, and an over-refined and luxurious regimen, are afflicted with the distressing disorder termed Nervousness, will find their complaint effectually cured by six weeks' service at home as kitchen or chamber-maid.

Taking it in Turn.—A clerk was assisting a clergyman to robe before the service commenced, and said to him, "Please, sir, I'm deaf." "Indeed! my good man," says the curate, "then how do you manage to follow me during the service?" "Why, sir," says the clerk, "I looks up, and when you shuts your mouth, I opens mine."

"What dogs are these, Sandy?" inquired a gentleman the other day, of a Scotch lad who was dragging a couple of waspish-looking terriers along a street in Jersey City, near the depot. "I dinna ken, sir," replied the urchin, "they cam' wi' the railway, and they ate the direction, and dinna ken whar to gang."

Strange, Moore, and Wright, three notorious punsters, were, on a certain occasion, dining together, when Moore observed, "There is but one knave among us, and that's *Strange*." "Oh, no," said Wright, "there is one *Moore*." "Aye," said Strange, "that's *Wright*."

The Advantages of Long Hair.—"No one would take you to be what you are," said an old-fashioned gentleman to a dandy who had more hair than brains. "Why?" was immediately asked. "Because they can't see your ears."

The school-officers of a small town in Dutchess County, in this State, having advertised for a school-master, received an "application" from a candidate of "good charictor," who said he "could fill up his time at taloring," if required.

Rebuff for a Lawyer.—A knavish attorney, asking a very worthy gentleman what was honesty? "What is that to you?" said he; "meddle with those things that concern you."

The adage of "Charity begins at home" is often nothing but a handsome mask worn by deformed Selfishness.

THE WEATHER.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

What a convenient thing the weather is,
For paucity of thought. How it helps out
All social intercourse. What would become
Of the fast talkers, when the daily news
Grows stale and stagnant, were it not for this?
———But most of all, it is the life and breath
Of ceremonious calls: "'Tis very cold;"
And every one assents. "How warm it is!"
Then straitway every hearer wipes his brow,
Feeling the heat still more. 'Tis something tho'
To find a subject on which all agree,
And hush the antagonistic spirit down
In sweet consent.
One from the country comes
To the Great Empire City. He would fain
Call on a dame of fashion, whom he knew
In other times. Donning his best, he mounts
The lofty steps, and rings the silver bell
With a good courage. Rustling silks are heard;
Oh! what on earth is he to say to her,
Who in these halls of marble, paint and gold,
Dwells like a queen? A happy thought unbinds
His wrinkling brow.
"Ma'am, 'tis exceeding cold."
To this grave truth, she gracefully subscribes.
—"They say there's never been such weather known
Since one cold Friday, fifty years ago,
When everything froze up. You can, perhaps,
Remember it."
"I've not that honor, Sir.—
My memory don't extend to what took place
Ere I was born!"
There was a thought too much
About the weather, friend.—But, back he comes,
New-horsed, and blundering, to the charge again.
—"'Twas hot, last summer, Ma'am—uncommon hot,
Even in the country. I should think that here,
Among these tall, brick houses, it would seem
Some like an air-tight stove. May-be you like
Warm weather, Ma'am."
"We spend the summer months
At some cool watering-place."
A solid pause!
What's to be done?
"Do you ride out much, Ma'am,
In pleasant weather?"
"No. Broadway's so block'd
With piles of snow, my husband will not let
The coachman drive there,—and 'tis very dull
In the back streets."
"I guess I see a storm,
Not far ahead. For such a day as this
Will prove a weather-breeder. I must be
A getting home, before another raft
Of blinding snow, to clog the railroads up.
Excuse so short a call. Good morning, Ma'am."
And forth he rushes to the clear, cold air,
Blessing the weather that had help'd him out
Of his dilemma, in Fifth avenue.
———But as for us, who do not need such help,
Methinks this hackney'd theme predominates
More than is fitting,—and we might as well
Make ourselves weather-cocks, and perch our thoughts
On some sharp steeple's point. The rain, the hail,
The snow,—the vapor and the veering wind,—
Absorb their intercourse, who might, perchance,
From this great habitable globe, sift out
Some speech of knowledge, or its Maker's skill.

Let's have a *weather-class*, who shall not talk
About the weather, but by certain rules
And regulations, which we herewith state:
—First, having said, concisely as we can,
What weather 'tis to-day, we will not trace
Its history through the past, or predicate
Its far-off future.
Second—Time thus saved
Shall be disposed of on the following terms:
Item, a word about some useful book;
Or, way of doing good; a word or two
To gird the youthful mind in duty's path,
To cheer the aged pilgrim on his course,
To balm the bleeding heart with sympathy;
A word or two of patriotic love
For our whole blessed country, and of praise
To Him who was our father's God, and ours.
———So may a moiety of the weather's claims
Pave out our pathway to a stormless sky.
Hartford, Conn., 1857.

THE ABDUCTED HEIRESS.

BY MRS. CAROLINE INGRAHAM.

AUTHOR OF "SARAH PERCIVAL; OR, THE BRIDE OF THE HOUSE OF GOLD," ETC. ETC.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ELOPEMENT.

The long hours of the next day, dragged on slowly and wearily to Justina. A pause before our fate is decided is always irksome, and in her case it was doubly so. She felt, instinctively, that the coming interview, would, in a great measure, determine her future life, and longed to have it over, and to know the worst.

The party were assembled after dinner, in the handsome drawing-room, which had scarcely been opened before, for twenty years. Mrs. De Courcey reclined in an easy chair, near the fireside, with the last new novel in her hand—Alfred, looking quite like his former self, but for his right arm which was bound up in a sling, was playing chess with his mother, beside one of the bay-windows, and Justina was walking back and forth in the shadow of the room, with her hands behind her, looking at them all.

"I declare this looks like genuine home comfort—does it not, mother?" said Alfred, looking up from his game, at the pleasant room.

"The genuine comfort of an English home," replied his mother. "Shall we ring for lights, my dear friends?"

"Oh no," said Mrs. De Courcey, quickly. "It is too bad to spoil the charm of this quiet hour, and I do not care to read. If it is getting too dark for you to see there, gather around the fire, and let us talk together."

"With all my heart," said Alfred, and sweeping the chess-board on one side, he let his mother draw his easy chair close to the fire, and establish him comfortably there.

"You make me so easy, my dear mother," he said, playfully, "that I don't mean to get well. I shall hate to go back to the old existence and never get spoiled again."

"Ah, my son. I am afraid I have always spoiled you," she said, looking at him fondly.

It may have been that she was right. But on such a nature as his, even a mother's indulgence can have no effect. He was still as thoughtful, as noble and gentle, as she had always known him. There was much apology, in the eyes of those who knew him, for the blind partiality with which she regarded him.

He looked around uneasily, as she sat down beside him, at the figure pacing to and fro, in the red gloom, at the farther end of the room.

"Will you not join us, Justina?" he asked. "Our circle is not complete without you."

She did not answer. Too deeply absorbed in her own bitter thoughts, she had almost forgotten that she was not alone. But when he called her the second time, she started and turned toward him.

"I beg your pardon, Alfred," she said, hurriedly. "Did you speak to me?"

"Certainly. You did not hear me the first time, I believe?"

"My thoughts were far away. I have not heard you speak before, and even now I am afraid I cannot tell what you said."

"I only asked you to come and join our circle," he said, a little coldly. It was his misfortune to love her too tenderly, and the thought that she had been quite unconscious of his presence, while thinking, perhaps, of another, pained and wounded him. Alas! he knew too well who that other must be, and in his heart he cursed the fatal hour that had ever brought those two together.

"I think you must excuse me," said Justina, absently. "It is pleasant to walk here in the dusk, and I feel the need of motion. Besides, I like to look at you all, sitting there in the glow of the fire. It is quite a picture—do not move, or you will break the charm."

"Paint us, Justina," said Mrs. De Courcey.

"I should like to do it, mother—but I shall never touch a brush again."

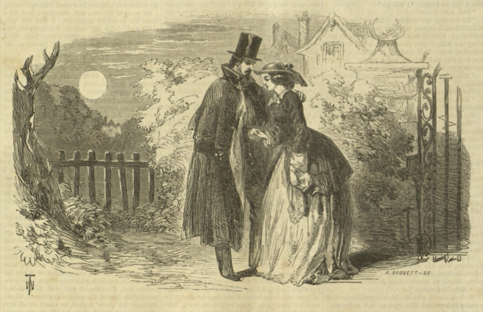
"What!"

"I am going to give up painting, mother."

"And why?"

"I cannot say."

This answer was only too true. She could not tell them it was because her pencil had last portrayed that face, which was luring her on to destruction. She could not say that undefined thoughts of guilt and shame must always be associated with that portrait in her mind, if all went wrong with her—and so she was silent.



THE MEETING AT THE OLD GATE.

But Mrs. De Courcey had been too proud of her daughter's talent to let it fall to the ground so easily.

"You talk strangely, my child," she said. "Why, to give up painting now when you are improving so astonishingly, is simply ridiculous. That last picture you painted—what was its name?"

"Spring," said Justina, feeling a bitter pang at the thought of him who named it, and of all that had been said in that eventful interview.

"Spring. Yes, I remember now, you told me that General Saville had advised you——"

"Mother!"

Had a bomb-shell burst in the midst of the room, it could have hardly produced more consternation than this simple name, so carelessly uttered. Alfred had started up in his chair,—his pale cheeks all a glow with passionate excitement, while his mother laid her hand upon his arm, and looked reproachfully at her friend. Justina, after that first involuntary exclamation, stood pale as death, with her head bowed down, like a criminal before her judges, and Mrs. De Courcey, flushing scarlet at the awkward mistake she had made, made haste to change the subject.

"Well—if you must give up painting, be it so. But your pictures—where are they?"

"All safe, mother. They were saved on the night of the fire," she added with a timid look at Alfred, who was lying back upon his pillows again, "and I packed and sent them down here with my own hands."

"Very well. It would be a pity to have them lost. Some of them were really beautiful."

"Especially the portrait," said Alfred, with a sarcastic smile.

"What do you mean?" said Justina, startled out of all her forced composure by his words.

"You and I know."

"Alfred, will you explain yourself," she asked, drawing herself up to her full height, while Mrs. De Courcey and her friend looked on in astonishment.

"Now don't quarrel, my dear children—don't," said Mrs. Ernstein, pleadingly. "You don't know what you are doing. An unkind word, spoken now, may rankle in the heart forever. Let the subject, whatever it may be, drop till another time. You do not wish to spoil the harmony of our first evening at home, I am sure.

"Justina and I are not going to quarrel, mother," said Alfred, with the same sarcastic smile. "We know each other too well. I only spoke of something which I would like to have explained at some future day, if she is willing, when I feel better able to talk with her than I do to-night."

"You shall have any explanation it is in my power to give, whenever or wherever you may choose to ask it," said Justina, haughtily.

"There—there—my dear children, let us put an end to this, or you will certainly quarrel," said Mrs. Ernstein, anxiously. "Justina, my love, I suppose you have not given up your music yet, even if you have your painting?"

"No, Mrs. Ernstein."

"Then go into the music-room—there is a dear, good girl—leave the door open, and play us something. Music is the best thing in the world for soothing the feelings."

Justina smiled slightly, but did as she was requested. She sat down at the piano-forte, and dashed off some brilliant waltzes, all the more brilliantly for the suppressed anger she felt. But the wondrous magic that lies in melodious sounds was not long in making itself felt. In spite of herself, she felt softened and tranquilized as her hand passed over the keys; and striking a few deep, rich chords, she left the instrument and seated herself before the organ.

This had been her favorite instrument from a child. She had inherited this peculiar taste from her father, who had been passionately fond of its rich and solemn tones, and her execution was almost perfect. Her small hands seemed to linger upon the ivory keys with a loving pressure, and draw the deepest, most magnificent sounds from them almost without an effort. And now, after a soft and mournful prelude, she struck, at once, into that splendid hymn, "Dies Iræ—Dies Illæ," and added to it the charm of her own sweet and powerful contralto voice.

Her listeners were breathless. With those majestic words sounding in their ears, how poor and small appeared the sorrows and vexations of their every-day life. And to the singer—oh! to her—what a blessed calm they brought. Her whole soul seemed borne upward on the tide of song to the throne of the Highest, and her young heart swelled with a feeling of intense adoration, that was of itself a prayer.

It was the best, the wisest preparation she could have made for the approaching interview. She felt it so. And as she rose from her seat, and joined the group by the fire-side again, her face was full of a calm determination to abide by the right, and defy the fascinations of one who had almost tempted her to sin.

All were silent for a moment; and then Justina said, quietly:

"I think I shall walk upon the terraces for a few moments, before I go to my room. The night is fine, and I will wrap up warmly. Good night, my dear mother—good night, Mrs. Ernstein."

She shook hands with her hostess, and kissed her mother twice. A remorseful tenderness made her linger for a moment beside Alfred's chair. He looked up at her, and she saw that his fine eyes were full of tears.

"Your music went to my heart, little one," he said, kindly. "With that sounding in my ears, I cannot cherish any paltry resentments. Come nearer—we are friends, are we not, Justina?"

"Always—always, Alfred."

"Yes, always—come what may. You have charmed the evil spirit with your song, my darling."

He pressed her hand, and smiled up at her, as she leaned over him. A sudden pang smote her heart at the thought of Saville, waiting for her even then. She could not meet those clear eyes—but bending still lower, she kissed him fondly and sadly, and unable to restrain her emotion, hurried from the room.

Down through the long avenue she glided like a spirit. The moon had not yet risen, but a clear glow in the sky betokened her speedy coming. Justina paused as she reached the lodge gate, and looked around her. Nothing stirred, save some wakeful bird in its leafy nest. A strange feeling—half joy, half sorrow—filled her heart.

"He is not coming," she said, aloud. "I need never see him again, since he breaks the appointment he made himself."

"And you are glad of the excuse to leave him forever—is it not so?" said a deep voice beside her.

She started and turned around. There, beside her, the man she should have called her evil genius, leaned against the gate.

"You are here, then?" she said, with a sigh.

"Yes, Justina, I have been waiting for you some time. You are late. What kept you?"

"I was singing to my mother."

"And to Alfred," added Saville, mockingly.

A flash of Justina's original spirit broke out then. She drew herself up haughtily, and looked at him.

"And if I was, what then?"

"Nothing."

He looked at her fixedly, as he pronounced the word in a low, sad tone, and for the first time the change in his manner struck her. He stood aloof from her with folded arms; he had not attempted to embrace her when they first met; and his whole demeanor was cold, sad, and distant. She could not understand the change. She looked wistfully in his dark and melancholy face a moment, and then turned to watch the young moon, just trembling into sight above the tips of the trees. But his continued silence puzzled her, and turning towards him with a gesture of impatience, she exclaimed,—

"Are you ill, or unhappy?"

"Both, Justina," he said, gravely. "I have been thinking, and for me to think is to grieve. Do you know what you came here for to-night, Justina?"

"To see you for the last time, to receive your last embrace, and bid you adieu forever."

He smiled sarcastically.

"Not at all, my dear child."

"What then?"

"You came here to elope with me!"

"I!"

"Yes, you. Do not start back, or look so terrified. I repeat it—you came here to elope with me."

"General Saville," said Justina, with dignity, "I certainly did *not* come here to be made a jest of. I begin to see my folly in ever loving you. Let me pass."

"Not yet." He held her hand firmly in his, and added,—

"I am not jesting with you. In the avenue yonder, and near the public road, stands a post-chaise with the swiftest horses attached that could be procured by money. Do you know for whom it is waiting?"

Her lips were white as she answered "No."

"For you and me, Justina."

"Saville, you surely do not mean——"

"Not now—not now, Justina. Think better of me now. I have been thinking—I have been going over our acquaintance from beginning to end. I have been very wrong, Justina."

She did not answer.

"You are a young and innocent girl. My life has been what I should blush to name before you. I am no worse and no better than other men, but I am not worthy of you. And so I leave you, to be won by another whom you love, and who *is* worthy of you."

"You are going, then?"

"I am going. If I have fallen into the error most men are liable to make, of supposing myself, as I am, worthy of a pure and innocent girl like you, my eyes are open now, and the best thing I can do is to rectify that mistake. And so, Justina, adieu!"

She looked at him in a bewildered way, as he raised her hand to his lips.

"You leave me, and in this way," she murmured. "After all your words of love, you care so little for me, that you can leave me like this. Oh, Saville, Saville! you have taught me a fearful lesson."

She buried her face in her hands. He bent over her and tried to soothe her.

"Do not weep; do not weep, my child."

"Do not fear me; I never weep," she said, raising her proud head suddenly. "But oh! from what an abyss I have escaped! How can I ever be thankful enough?"

"What do you mean?"

"Suppose a case. If I had been weak enough to fly with you—you loving me as little as I now find you do—after awhile, what would have been my fate?"

He started and colored painfully.

"Good God! You cannot think me so base as to wrong you, my poor pet lamb! You cannot think I would fly with you, unless I intended to make you my wife."

"Of course, I know your honor and my own too well, to dream of such a thing," she said, with dignity. "But men tire sometimes of their wives. If you had married me, and then grown weary of me, what should I have done? I could not have lived!"

He looked at her with a melancholy smile.

"Did you then care so much, my little one, for the worn and weary old man?"

And bending down, he drew her to his breast, and kissed her. The gentle caress seemed to melt the cold reserve which each had wrapped around them like a garment.

"I loved you so much," she murmured, "that your coldness has cut me to the heart. How could you deceive me so? I shall never dare to trust again."

Pride and prudence left him, as she leaned her head against his breast, and looked up in his face.

"Justina," he whispered, "I never in my life loved you half so much as now."

She started and looked up at him with a half pleased, half frightened air.

"But what has made you seem so strange and cold?"

"I may have seemed so, but at heart I am the same as ever. But for the last twenty-four hours I have thought deeply of the step I proposed taking. With you for my wife, Justina, I know well what happiness would be in store for me. But I am an old man already, my darling, while you are in your first youth. As time wears on, you may regret the hour when you gave your hand to me; you may even sigh in secret for another, and look forward eagerly to the hour of my death. And that—oh, there could be no worse torture on earth for me."

He paused. She was listening with her head bent down, and said nothing.

"Again I repeat what I have already said, that I am not worthy of you. I may regret my early follies, but I have no right to ask you to wed yourself to them. Your husband should be free from guilt of every kind, Justina. He should be able to look you calmly in the face, and say that he had never done wrong to the sacred image of you within his heart; he should be able to swear to you that he had kept 'the whiteness of his soul,' in spite of all temptation; and I—God help me—I lost it long ago."

She raised her head now, and looked with a bright smile in his face.

"And is that all?"

"All, Justina?—is it not enough?"

"Love can forgive much."

The impulse came over him strongly, as he looked down upon her, to forget everything and urge her to fly with him. But, to his credit be it said, he restrained himself, even when she seemed most easy to be won. He lifted her head from his breast.

"There is another reason, my darling, which we seem to have forgotten for a time—your mother."

"My mother!" echoed Justina, starting away from him: "Oh, I had forgotten her!"

"And Alfred."

"Yes. I cannot leave them. I am their only comfort, and I cannot break my mother's heart. Saville——"

"Well, Justina."

"We must part!"

"I know it."

"And forever!"

"And forever!—though I am afraid I know the meaning of the word far better than you, darling."

She came close to him, and flung her arms about him, with a low cry.

"Oh, if I could weep!"

"Weep here upon my breast," he murmured.

"I-cannot," she answered, with a choking sob. "It is long since I have wept, and my tears seem burning into my brain."

"Poor child! poor child! Oh! why were we two ever brought together!"

"Only to be separated," said the girl, bitterly. "And you must go. Leave me now, Eustace, while I have strength to let you go."

"One last kiss, then, for the sake of our unhappy love. And Justina, when you remember how hard it was for me to do right, and leave you—you will think kindly of me. You will not forget me—oh, I could never bear that."

"I can never forget you—never—never!"

She clung to him a moment in speechless agony—kissed his lips, his forehead, and his hands, and then pushed him away, murmuring,

"Go now—now—while I can bear it."

He turned away, and she sank down upon the ground with a low, desolate cry. He could not bear it. He came back and raised her in his arms again.

"Justina"—he whispered, "will you leave all—and dare all, to be my wife? Will you go?"

She was weak as a child in her sudden joy at finding him near her again.

"Anywhere—anywhere—so that you are with me. But I can never give you up."

"You need not, darling."

He threw the heavy cloak he wore about her, and lifting her in his arms, hurried down the avenue to the carriage. Justina knew that she was leaving all—home—friends, and it might be, happiness—behind her. But she only clung to him more closely. She had never known how deeply she loved him till now. Some mysterious tie seemed binding them together, which could only be severed with life, and rather than yield him up, she sacrificed everything that loved her.

They reached the carriage—the driver closed the door, and sprang to his seat, and they were rattling away at the swifest speed of four strong horses. A sudden sense of her condition struck forcibly on the girl's heart. She hid her face upon her companion's breast, and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DISCOVERY.

Mrs. Ernstein and her son were the first to present themselves at the breakfast table on the following morning.

In a well-ordered house, there is a certain poetry about the aspect of the breakfast table. The hand and eyes of the one we love, has carefully directed all—affection displays itself in the neatly folded napkin and the glittering knife and fork. It is an attention, worth scores of empty protestations, and as we sink into the easy chair made ready for us, and look around with a sigh of satisfaction, we thank our lucky stars that the day of romance has gone by, and that we can appreciate and understand such manifestations of affection as these.

Something in the aspect of the bright and well ordered room, pleased mother and son alike. Mrs. Ernstein rubbed her hands with an air of cheerful self-satisfaction, and exclaimed—

"Well, really Alfred, I must say, this looks much more pleasant than the smoky house in London. Just look from these windows. Did you ever see such a view. And the air—is'nt it delightful? And last—though not least—the breakfast table."

"Spread by no hands, as you may guess, but those of 'Fairly Fair,'" quoted Alfred, with a smile. "There lies the charm for me, mother. This coffee is clear and bright as amber—these eggs are done to a turn, and these rolls, as you break them open, are bright and white as foam. But the thought that Justina's taste dictated the arrangement of the table, is far more to me than what is on it."

Mrs. Ernstein only smiled, but did not answer, being too much engaged in discussing the dainties before her, to speak.

Alfred rose, and went toward a large parcel wrapt in cloth, that was leaning against the wall at the farther end of the room.

"What have we here, mother?"

"I am sure I do not know. Some package, probably, that the servants have forgotten."

"But certainly, the breakfast room is not the place for such things."

"I know—but in the hurry of our arrival, it may have been overlooked. Ring the bell for the servant to come and take it away, if you cannot finish your breakfast while it is there."

"I will see first what it contains."

He tried to unfasten the knot that confined the cloth, and growing impatient, seized a knife from the table and cut it.

"Now for the unfolding of the mystery," he said gaily. "It is hard and square—it will probably turn out to be a fireboard, or one of those old family paintings that used to hang in the hall in London. I hope they have not come here to haunt me with their ugliness. Here comes the last wrapper—presto—change—now mother, look!"

She did look, and both started back, as if an adder had stung them. It was the portrait of Saville, looking earnestly and triumphantly up in the face of the man he had wronged. Alfred turned away with an oath—the first his mother had ever heard from his lips.

"My boy!"

"Mother—pardon me. It was wrong—but the shock was too sudden. I was so gay and happy, but a moment before—and now—that accursed face smiling upon me, will drive me mad! But he shall not triumph here. I'll tear him from that gilded frame, and trample him beneath my feet."

His mother seized his arm as he sprang towards the picture.

"Alfred, what are you going to do? Remember how many hours of toil Justina has spent over that picture, and how dearly she prizes it."

The unhappy young man looked at her a moment in silence.

"You are right, mother. I cannot mar her work, or injure what she loves."

He staggered to his chair, and laying his head upon his folded arms, wept like a child. It may have been weak and foolish—but he loved her with his whole soul, and his heart seemed almost broken by the sudden blow.

A servant entered and said something in a low voice, to Mrs. Ernstein.

"What here!" she replied blushing like a girl. "What can he want at this hour?"

"He says he comes on important business, and begs you will make no delay."

"Who is it, mother," asked Alfred, looking up.

"Colonel Sair, the friend of General Saville."

"What brings him here?"

"I do not know," she answered, after a slight hesitation. "But show him into the drawing room, and I will be with him in a few moments."

"Pardon me if I intrude, but really my business will admit of no delay. Every moment is of the greatest importance," said another voice at the door.

They turned and saw Colonel Sair standing there, pale and anxious looking, and with his dress stained and disordered by travel.

"May I come in, my dear Madam."

"Certainly, Colonel. Come in and take breakfast with us," said Mrs. Ernstein, recovering from her surprise, and advancing to meet him.

He shook hands with Alfred, took the seat she offered him, and looked around with a thoughtful, and pre-occupied air.

"You will find the coffee refreshing after your journey—and these rolls—allow me to recommend them," said Mrs. Ernstein, hospitably.

"Thank you, Madam."

He took the cup, and dropped in lump after lump of sugar, in a way that showed plainly how little he knew what he was doing. Mrs. Ernstein watched his proceedings with an embarrassed air. What could ail the gay and gallant colonel?

His eyes, wandering round the room, fell at last upon the picture of Saville. He leaped from his chair and exclaimed—

"Good God, Madam! What is that doing here?"

"It is the portrait of your friend," said Mrs. Ernstein gravely, fully assured that the colonel was either insane, or intoxicated.

"But how came it here?"

"The artist brought it here."

"And may I ask who the artist can be?"

"Certainly, sir. It was Miss Justina De Courcey."

The colonel sank into his chair again. There was a long pause, during which Mrs. Ernstein and Alfred exchanged glances, while his eyes were fixed thoughtfully on the portrait.

"When did he sit for this?" he asked at last.

"Never, sir."

The colonel looked puzzled, and pulled at his heavy moustache.

"Miss De Courcey painted it from memory," said Alfred, to whom every word was a pang.

"Ah!"

There was much that was significant in that simple exclamation, and Alfred and his mother colored deeply. The colonel looked another way.

"And Miss Justina—is she with you?" he asked hesitatingly.

"She is, sir."

He looked as if the answer had been unexpected.

"You are sure she is in the house?"

"She is in her room, sir," said Mrs. Ernstein, with dignity. "May I ask why Colonel Sair is so earnest in his enquiries for her?"

They all rose from their seats—the colonel pale and agitated.

"My dear Madam, I know I must appear impertinent—but do not be angry. Answer one more question. Has General Saville been here since you came down?"

"Never, sir."

It was now Alfred's turn to grow pale.

"You are sure she has not seen him."

"I am."

"And that she is now in her room?"

Mrs. Ernstein bowed.

"Then my dear friends, I rejoice with you from the bottom of my heart. I might have known it was all a foolish blunder of my own."

"What do you mean?" cried mother and son, in a breath,

"My dear Madam, I found that Saville had left town, and some one said he had gone down into Dorsetshire. I knew how much he admired Miss Justina, and that she was engaged to Alfred here. I came after him, travelling night and day, dreading I know not what. This morning, just before dawn, we passed a post-chaise flying along the road like the wind. Some sudden impulse made me call out—"Saville." A gentleman thrust his head from the window, and as suddenly drew it back. They were out of sight in a moment, but, although it was scarcely day, I could have sworn in the one hurried glance I had of him, that it was Saville. Before I started in pursuit I thought I would hasten on here, and see if the bird had really flown, for I should not like to make myself ridiculous, you know, by racing over the country after a man who is a perfect stranger to me. But since you say Saville has not been here, and the lady is safe in her chamber, why, it's all right, and I'm the happiest dog alive to think my friend is still the man I thought him. Mrs. Ernstein—you must excuse me, but I'm too happy to keep still. Toll-de-riddle, rol," and the colonel executed an impromptu pigeon wing with considerable agility.

He checked it, however, on seeing the faces of his companions assume an alarmed expression.

"This very morning, did you say?" asked Mrs. Ernstein, anxiously.

"Yes, Madam—before light."

"Mother," said Alfred, "have you seen Justina this morning?"

"No."

"Or since she left us last night?"

"No—but don't look like that, my boy; of course she is in her room. I will send a servant up to ask her to come down, and then we shall all have a hearty laugh at our folly."

She rang the bell and a servant entered.

"Go to Miss De Courcey's room, and ask her if she will come down. Tell her a gentleman from London wishes to see her immediately."

"That will bring her down at once," she added, looking around, as he left the room. "Curiosity is the easiest thing to be aroused in a woman's heart."

All were silent. The moments wore away like ages. At length his step was heard upon the stairs and he entered the room.

"Well," said Mrs. Ernstein.

"Miss Justina is not in her room, Madam."

A cry of rage and grief broke from the lips of Alfred. His mother was calm.

"Not in her room. Are you sure?"

"Yes, Madam."

"There must be some strange mistake here."

"If you please, Madam," said the servant bowing profoundly, "Miss Justina's bed has not been slept in; and her maid just told me, as I came down, that her mistress was not in her room all night. She did not speak of it before, for fear of alarming you, Madam."

"That will do. You can go," said Mrs. Ernstein, quietly, and the servant left the room.

She laid her hand upon Alfred's shoulder. "My son, it is useless for us to try to deceive ourselves. She has gone."

"And with that villain!" said Alfred springing to his feet. "But I will follow him to the end of the earth. Mother—don't hold me, or I shall go mad!"

"Hush, Alfred! Sit down here beside me. Are you in a fit state to follow any one? Colonel Sair, what can be done. Is it best to pursue them?"

"I should say so, by all means," he replied. "A thousand accidents may occur to delay them."

"And where do you think they have gone?"

"To Gretna Green, I should presume."

"You hear, mother," said Alfred, bounding in his chair; my bride is taken from me, and I am expected to sit down and smile. I will be treated like a boy no longer. I will go."

"But, Alfred——"

"Do not stop me, mother. I have always been a dutiful child to you, but here you can have no authority. Colonel Sair will you accompany me. Ring the bell, if you please, and order the post horses at once. Tell Andrew to mount my hunter, and ride on before to order relays. Perhaps we may yet reach them."

"Alfred I command you to stay," said Mrs. Ernstein.

The young man turned very pale.

"Mother, for the first time in my life, I must disobey you?"

She clung to him as he went towards the door.

"Rash boy," she cried, "do you think you are the only one that suffers now? Think of my feelings—and think, too, of her poor mother. I believe it will break her heart when she hears this."

"Hush—here she comes!" said Alfred, drawing back as the door opened.

The first breath of country air seemed to have worked wonders for Mrs. De Courcey. She had been walking to and fro upon the lawn, and a delicate pink tint suffusing her pale cheek, gave back to her face some of the girlish beauty for which it had been famed.

"I fear I am late," she said, as she entered the room. "But the beauty of the morning must prove my excuse. The air was so delicious, my dear Margaret, that I could not help staying to breathe it."

"I am glad you have found it so, replied Mrs. Ernstein, who felt constrained to say something. "But, Eveleen, here is a friend of whom you have often heard us speak—from London. Colonel Sair, Mrs. De Courcey."

Eveleen bowed, with the faintest possible look of wonder in her large blue eyes, at the appearance of a guest at such an unseasonable hour, and in such a disordered dress. And then a solemn silence fell over the whole group.

It is with a strange mingling of awe and pity that we look upon a person who stands, unconsciously, at the threshold of a fearful sorrow. It is sad to see the beautiful smile upon the lip and in the eye, and know that by one little word of ours, it may be turned into tears. Like those who would hide the corpse of a murdered man from the eyes of his dearest friends, we stand before our secret, and strive to screen it from those it most concerns. But the life-blood of the victim oozes slowly out, and betrays all—and the secret cannot long be kept.

And thus, in that pleasant breakfast-room, those three were trying to hide their sorrow from the unconscious woman whose every word was like a dagger thrust to their bleeding hearts.

"I did not hear Justina singing in her room this morning as I left my own," she remarked. "I came down to the table expressly to give her a pleasant surprise, and now she is not here. My dear Margaret, you must scold her. It will not do to have her indolent in the country."

No one answered, and for the first time the evident constraint of the party seemed to strike her. She looked at them narrowly.

"Good people—you seem grave and silent. In the name of God"—she added, with sudden terror—"what is the matter?"

"Can you bear it, Eveleen?" asked Mrs. Ernstein putting her arm around her waist.

"Go on."

"Colonel Sair came down early this morning to tell us some terrible news, which has since been confirmed."

"Go on, Margaret, don't stop."

"Eveleen, it is about——"

"What—has the bank failed, and am I beggar? Well, I can bear it."

"Oh, worse than that—far worse than that?"

"It is not about Justina," said Mrs. De Courcey, growing white to the very lips.

"Alas—it is!"

"Tell me quickly."

"She has left us, Eveleen."

"Dead!" cried Mrs. De Courcey, with a bewildered look. "It was only last night that I saw her alive and well."

"She is not dead, Eveleen."

"What then! why do you torment me in this way?" said Mrs. De Courcey, impatiently.

"I almost wish she was."

"If there is one in this room that loves me, let him or her speak out at once," cried Mrs. De Courcey in a hoarse, unnatural voice.

"Eveleen—she has eloped!"

The unhappy mother uttered a faint cry, and fell back in her chair. But when they pressed around her, she motioned them away.

"When did she go?"

"Last night, Eveleen."

"And while my kiss was yet warm upon her lips. Well. Now tell me one thing more. This man, who has lured her from her and home friends—who is he?"

"Saville," said the indignant voice of Alfred.

"Saville—your bosom friend?"

"Yes—and yonder he smiles, mockingly, at my anguish."

"Where."

He pointed to the portrait. It was the first time she had ever seen it. She started violently, gave a long, earnest look at it, and turning to him, said with a trembling voice—

"Alfred—have some pity. Tell me that this is not the face of Saville—that this is not the man who has taken my daughter away."

"Dear Madam, I cannot. It is Saville."

"For God's sake, then, get horses, and ride after them for life or death. Oh, this could not be! Heaven could not permit so fearful a crime."

"Eveleen—you are pale—lean on me," said Mrs. Ernstein, shocked at the sudden change in her face.

"Ride—ride, for life and death," she murmured, faintly. "As for me—I think my heart is broken. I believe that I can die now."

She sank, senseless, beside the portrait, whose dark eyes seemed fixed upon her, with a smile of mockery. All was confused in the breakfast room, and, as they bore her to her chamber, the portrait was hurled into the open porch by Alfred, where it lay neglected among a waste of flowers.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

◆

PERSONS will refrain from evil-speaking when persons refrain from evil-hearing.

"NOW AND THEN."

BY MARY C. VAUGHAN.

"I never knew anything about sorrow, or trouble, or care, when I lived in my father's house. Then I was as happy as the day was long,—no responsibility, no fault-finding, nobody sick, or cross; nothing to do but enjoy myself, while all my wants were supplied without a thought or exertion on my part. But it isn't so now!" and Mrs. Wood, the speaker,—one of those little, pallid, nerveless women, who remind one of nothing so much as a washed-out calico or ribband, not only "faded," but with hair, and face, and eyes of a dull, neutral tint, as if the colors had all "run" into one general dinginess,—sighed deeply, and wiped away one of the stock of tears that she kept always lurking under her eye-lids for instant use.

Mrs. Wilson, to whom she uttered this complaint, was a woman of perhaps thirty-five years of age,—two or three years older than Mrs. Wood, probably, but with her bright eyes, glowing cheeks, and the energy that was visible in every movement of her form and features, seeming much younger. She smiled a little as she answered,

"How old were you when you married Mr. Wood?"

"About eighteen," was the reply, with a dismal sigh.

"Too young," said Mrs. Wilson, parenthetically, adding, in a louder tone, "I suppose you had your choice in the matter—nobody thought of putting any constraint upon your wishes in this more than in other things?"

"Why, no; what made you think so?"

"I did not think so. But you came to me for advice and consolation, and I am trying to discover the real grounds of your trouble. I am to understand—am I not—that you married Mr. Wood because you loved him, or with the understanding of a mutual attachment?"

"Of course you are. Everybody knows that there never was a more devoted wife, and that I've borne more than any woman ever did before, and——but they don't pretend to say that Wood don't care for me, do they?" and the color flashed over her pale face, and her dull eyes brightened with sudden energy at the thought.

Mrs. Wilson smiled as she answered:

"Not at all, Mrs. Wood; but now please believe me when I say that I am only seeking a knowledge of your own experiences, that I may determine for myself if your 'now' is so very much worse than your 'then.' I have listened to no gossip, and shall retail none. So please tell me if you did not expect to be happy when you married the man you loved, and went away from the home of your childhood to live with him in one where you had every prospect of a pleasant life, undisturbed by any doubt of his affection, or by those pressing and sordid cares that poverty brings upon so many a young couple at the commencement of life."

"Certainly, I expected to be happier than I had ever been before. And Edward was so very fond of me, and so anxious to comply with all my wishes, that I thought I had a right to expect it. But I did not know what was in store for me."

"Did you feel that any effort on your part was needed to secure, and render permanent, the happiness of your home?"

"Well—I really can't say that I thought about it. I think I expected everything to go on just as it commenced. I am sure that I would have been contented so have had good servants always, to keep the house in order, and have the meals ready punctually, and to have had Edward always spend his evenings at home, except when he went out with me. But Edward's always scolding about the house being out of order, and finding fault with his meals, and I've so many children that there is never a time that they are all well; and I can't often go out with him, and he does not like to stay home of an evening, when the children are all in, and as noisy as possible."

"Quite a catalogue of grievances, truly, Mrs. Wood, and no doubt enough to weary you very much and very often. But, after all, it seems to me that you have now within your power the enjoyment of a happiness far more full and complete than that of your pleasant home of days long ago. Your husband is one of the best of men—honorable, benevolent, just and kind. In your home there are growing up around you several beautiful and intelligent children. You are amply provided with all that is necessary for the well-being of your home, and all who are in it. You have no more than the ordinary amount of sickness or of domestic trials. Now will you tell me where the reason lies that you are not as happy now as when in your father's house?"

"I have told you that my life, now, is one continual scene of trial and annoyance. Then I had nothing to try or annoy me. I suppose the reason is that I'm doomed to be miserable."

"Nothing of the kind, Mrs. Wood. The reason is in yourself."

"Myself?"

"Yes, in yourself. You married without any sense of the respnosibilities you were taking upon yourself. For that your parents are partly to be blamed. You expected to be surrounded, through life, with all the attentions which your husband lavished upon you as lover and bridegroom. Then you expected that your duties could be performed by others, were willing to shift the burden of your cares upon other shoulders. You seem to have kept up this delusion at a fearful cost to yourself, if not to your family; for you tell me of a disorderly household, noisy, unmanageable children, and a fault-finding husband, who, unable to find comfort and enjoyment for his leisure hours in his home, flees away from it, to surround himself by you know not what influences. Do you candidly believe that this state of things has been induced without any fault on your part, and that you have nothing whatever to do toward amending it?"

"I am sure I don't know what I can do. Edward never listens to me now, and the boys are quite beyond any control of mine, and are constantly bullying or coaxing the girls into all manner of mischief; and as for the servants, they do just as they please. If I should venture to complain of anything they do, they would demand their wages and march off; and that only gives me the trouble of looking up new ones, who are never any better than the last. Oh, no, it is quite impossible for me to do anything. I only wish I was a girl again in my father's house."

"Well, as you can't be that, shall I tell you what I think you can do and should do?"

"Yes."

"And will you try to follow my advice?"

"If it isn't something impossible. You are so well and energetic, always, that you cannot make allowance for any poor health, and the annoyance of all those noisy children."

"Well, then, instead of giving you advice, Mrs. Wood, I will tell you something of my own history. There is a wider contrast, in every respect, between my 'now' and my 'then' than yours. Shall I tell you?"

"Oh, do, if you please. I shall like to hear that, for Edward was saying, only last night, that if I would but pattern by Mrs. Wilson, the lost happiness would soon come back to our home; and that was why I came to see you to-day, hoping that you could tell me something that might do me good."

"Your husband has probably a higher opinion of me than I deserve, but he knows, as I do, that nothing of worth can be gained without effort, or even retained after it has become ours. But to my little story:

"My home, in girlhood, was not like yours. It was a comfortable home at my earliest recollection; but we had no luxuries, and whatever small enjoyments we had were gained by care and labor. My father was a farmer in a small way, cultivating a few acres of his own, and, sometimes, land hired from his wealthier neighbors. I was the only child, and, from my earliest remembrance, was accustomed to see my mother always busy, and I learned to assist her, when very young, at the lighter household tasks.

"As I grew older, I went to the little brown school-house every summer, a pupil of the 'mistress' who taught there for the time being; but winters I was detained home, on account of the distance and bad roads. I was very fond of books, and read everything I could obtain, though I often had to work hard to gain time for this enjoyment. My mother was anxious that I should prepare myself for a teacher, and was willing to work hard, and sacrifice a great deal, that her object might be gained.

"I had nearly grown to womanhood, when my father was attacked by a severe illness that lasted for some months, and from the effects of which he never fully recovered. This illness brought a heavy burden of labor upon my mother and myself; but we never thought of complaining, because we looked forward to the time when he would be well again, and take his place once more among the toilers.

"But we were doomed to a bitter disappointment. My father recovered, in a great measure, his strength, but he seemed to have lost his old energy and activity. Our little farm was but half cultivated, and he ceased to eke out his subsistence in other ways, as he had done formerly. One after another our cows, horses, farming utensils, were sold to meet pressing emergencies, or to pay the debts contracted during his long illness. He grew listless and discouraged, and took to spending much of his time at the neighboring tavern, where, although he never tippled, he would sit all day, talking and gossipping with the idle frequenters of the place. The head-aches and side-aches, that made work impossible, grew more frequent, and the only remedy seemed to be found in a lounge in the bar-room, or upon the tavern stoop.

"Of course my mother's task and my own grew harder with this state of things. I could go to school no more, except at rare intervals. I went out to spinning, or worked in the dairy or kitchen of our wealthy neighbors, and gave my earnings to my mother. I was shut out from the enjoyment of books, and the privileges of acquiring knowledge in a great measure, though I constantly kept my purpose in view and learned all I could, filling up every leisure moment with a lesson.

"It was a very proud day when, by the help and recommendation of some kind friends, I obtained the situation of teacher in a little district school a few miles distant from my home. Only a few small children attended there in summer so that I was thought competent for the position in spite of my youth and inexperience. I did so well that I was offered the school for winter, but refused, preferring to spend my time in study. But the following summer I returned, and afterward for three years constantly taught and became very popular, while my wages almost sustained the family at home. Of course these years were marked by toils and struggles, but I do not intend to speak of them. I was amply repaid for all by the power of making my parents comfortable.

"About the close of these three years a terrible misfortune fell upon us. I have told you that my father frequented the tavern a great deal, and the habit had all the while grown stronger and stronger, until he was seldom at home save at meal-times. I was teaching in a district some miles away from my home, when one day a wagon drove to the door, and the son of one of our neighbors alighted, and came into the school-house. He informed me that my mother was quite sick, and that my presence was at once demanded. So I hurriedly dismissed my little troop of scholars, and was soon on my way homeward.

"No sooner were we on the road than the whole story came out. My father had, the day previous, been arrested on suspicion of being concerned in a robbery which had taken place in our neighborhood. He had spent the two previous days, in company with a pair of ill-looking strangers, at the tavern, and left there with them at a later hour than usual on the night of the robbery, and, to give ground to the suspicion, some of the stolen articles had been secreted on our premises. My father was already an inmate of the county jail, while his supposed accomplices had so far escaped pursuit.

"I found my mother, indeed, ill with grief and alarm; for though we had been poor no stain of dishonor had ever attached to our humble name. She could not deny that my father had returned home on that fatal night at a much later hour than usual, but, like me, she had the fullest confidence in his innocence. As soon as possible I left her in good hands and went away to visit my father in the jail. He was very glad to see me, though overwhelmed with grief and shame. From him I learned that the two strangers had talked with him a great deal about city life, and that he had liked to listen, that when they had become quite familiar they questioned him about the residencies of the neighborhood, and particularly of the house that was robbed. They had seemed very curious about country habits, and he had talked with them very freely. On the night of the robbery they had requested him to show them the way toward a town a few miles distant, from which a stage-coach started at midnight. He had walked with them some distance, which accounted for his late return home.

"I cannot tell you the details of the next few week's employments. I had some money, and kind friends lent or gave me more. With some chance words dropped by the strangers, and not intended for my father's ear, to guide me, I determined to find them. I feed lawyers, and did what I could do myself, going twice to the city on the business. I worked very hard, went into some strange places, and did some strange things for a woman to do. But the result was that when the trial came on, in a few weeks, my father was acquitted, for I had found witnesses to prove where he was between the time of his leaving the tavern and his arrival at home, and the impossibility of his having been at the place of robbery. The two strangers, too, had been found in possession of some of the stolen property, and they were sentenced to the full penalty of the law.

"My father came home to die. Grief, and shame, and anxiety, aided by the discomforts of the jail, had done their work. He died and my mother soon followed him, and I was left alone. The sale of my little patrimony left me free from debt, and left a small overplus which I devoted to my long and hopelessly-desired object of attending a good school for a short time. I thought it the wisest mode of using the money, though some of my friends would have dissuaded me. But I was never sorry, for by the few months' study and discipline I became competent to teach a school of young ladies, which I soon after opened in a large village near my former home.

"Here I taught successfully for two years, and here I made the acquaintance of Mr. Wilson. After we had known each other some time, he proposed to me and I accepted him. Not long after I was informed, by one of those individuals who spend much of their lives in inquiring into the affairs of others, that he had, at some period, been addicted to dissipated habits, and the information was coupled with the advice to break off the engagement.

"I thought much and deeply of what I had heard. Though Mr. Wilson was then, as I was firmly persuaded, addicted to such habits, yet I saw that with his generous nature and strong social tendencies, he was liable to temptations from which characters less essentially loveable were exempt. I did not need then to be told that my influence over him was almost unbounded, and I enquired of myself if I were strong enough to lead him in the right direction, if it were in my power to so study and conform to his tastes as to make home happier than any and all other places, and if I loved him so well that, under all circumstances, I could make my society pleasanter to him than any other. The result was I resolved that I would try.

"More than once I was warned, for the tale of some wild freak of his early youth had followed him to the village, when he came to make his home there, but I thought I had studied his character better and more thoroughly than any one else, and I was fully persuaded that it was my mission to become his wife. Don't laugh, Mrs. Wood, at that expression. I know that every girl who is in love and beloved, discovers evidences of such a mission, but I resolved upon a work higher than most girls think themselves called to perform when they marry. I married not only because I expected to secure my own happiness, to become happier than ever I was before, but because I felt that the power had been delegated to me, under Providence, of 'saving a soul from death.'

"We were very happy at first, and I almost forgot my fears. Mr. Wilson was always at home, or in my company, except when business, to which he gave strict attention, called him away. I felt a little foolish at times, and as if in a sort of mock heroism, I had quite overrated my 'mission,' when I saw how good and noble my husband was, as every day revealed some more excellent trait, and drew me ever nearer to him in the true marriage bond.

"But when we had been married a year I had a long, lingering sickness. After all danger was past, and I was no longer confined to my couch, I remained in a feeble, sickly state, unable to act or think with my accustomed energy, or to interest myself in my accustomed pursuits. It was at this period that my husband began first to absent himself from the home which no longer possessed its wonted attractions. I missed him, but was too feeble in mind to reason about it, and never thought of enquiring the cause.

"My physician had often said that I needed something to arouse me, and it came when my husband was brought home to me, one night, intoxicated and bleeding, with torn garments, and bruised features, from a tavern brawl. He had been tempted and had gone away from his dismal home to seek the companionship of those whose society could but do him harm.

"I could not make you comprehend, Mrs. Wood, the trials, and the sorrows, and the efforts of the next two years. But I never despaired, and never faltered. My work lay before me, and I gave myself to it. I was determined to redeem my husband, and I succeeded. Ruin and shame more than once stared us in the face, but they were averted; and the time came, at length, when my husband had shaken off the chains of that fearful vice and was a free man once more. Home became to him the dearest place, and his wife the best-beloved. We were poor, but we struggled on bravely, side by side, my husband working in his office, and I at home—cook, and nursery maid, and housekeeper, all in one, at times, but none the less happy for that, because it was for him and those dear little ones I toiled.

"Now we have a competence again, and do not need to work so hard, and we are very happy, though sickness sometimes comes to us, and death has robbed us of one dear child. My husband ascribes all to me, and takes little credit to himself for the struggles and trials he underwent in freeing himself from the toils of his vice, deeming all he suffered but a fit penance for the crime of yielding to temptation.

"I have told you this, Mrs. Wood, only to show what even a woman may do by effort—to show you what I think are the responsibilities that rest upon us in every situation of life, and most of all when we voluntarily, as in the marriage vow, take into our keeping the happiness of others. If you will but learn from my simple story that effort, constant effort is the only condition which secures us happiness here, my object will have been entirely accomplished, and you may yet find yourself happier by far than in the days of your girlhood."

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GRATITUDE.

'God made the flowers to beautify
The earth, and cheer man's careful mood;
And he is happiest who hath power
To gather wisdom from a flower,
And wake his heart in every hour
To pleasant gratitude."

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THE DUELIST'S CODE.

——Revenge, which still we find
The weakest frailty of a feeble mind.

By this code, a Christian and a gentleman are made inconsistent appellations of the same person; you are not to expect eternal life, if you do not forgive injuries; and your mortal life is uncomfortable if you are not ready to commit a murder in resentment for an affront: for good sense as well as religion is so utterly banished the world, that men glory in their very passions, and pursue trifles with the utmost vengeance; so little do they know that to forgive is the most arduous and noble pitch human nature can arrive at. A coward has often fought, a coward has often conquered, but "a coward never forgave." The power of doing that flows from a strength of soul conscious of its own force; whence it draws a certain safety which its enemy is not of consideration enough to interrupt; for it is peculiar in the make of a brave man to have his friends seem much above him, his enemies much below him.

AFFINITY.

BY MARY FORREST.

“Number thy lamps of love, and tell me now,
How many canst thou re-light at the stars,
And blush not at their burning?”

Be noble in your friendships;
Gather a chosen few
Around the spirit's chancel,
Where drops the heavenly dew;
Let them be rich in wisdom—
Let them be great and true,
With a strong and holy purpose,
Who take of the feast with you

Be guarded in your friendships,
For the love you bear to those,
Who, like a living chaplet,
Your highest life enclose;
Link not a mere pretender
To the jewelled chain you hold,
Nor stain your spirit's tablet
With a worthless name enrolled.

A peerless gem united
To the coronal you wear,
Reflects its blended graces
And stamps new beauty there;
While the glare of paste and tinsel
Outshines the purer rays,
And o'er your proud tiara
An envious mockery plays.

Be *reverent* in your friendships;
Approach with holy care
Each hushed and guarded temple,
And the mysteries shrined there;
And never a word ungentle—
Never a thought unkind,
For the beloved and loving—
The beautiful soul-affined!

Be royal in your friendships;
Gather a noble few
Around the inner immortal,
To drink of the heavenly dew;
For out of the ashes of earth-loves
Springs the Phœnix divine—
The golden loves of the angels,
Which round the Eternal entwine.

New York, 1857.

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KARMEL THE SCOUT;

OR,

THE REBEL OF THE JERSEYS.

A STORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.,

AUTHOR OF “THE GUNMAKER OF MOSCOW,” “THE STORM SECRET,” “ORION, THE GOLD-BEATER,” ETC., ETC.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1857 by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER XXXIV

CONCLUSION.

“Arthur Lincoln,” spoke the scout, as soon as all was hushed, “what was the work you had in hand when we entered?”

“Do you imagine I will answer your questions?” the baronet returned. “Who gave you the right to come here and catechise me?”

“Who gave me the right? O—Arthur Lincoln, can you still hope to avoid me? Can you hope longer to avoid the disclosures you have feared since you first saw me in this very room last winter?”

“How now, foul Rebel? Have you some base lie conjured up with which to blacken my character?”

“Wretch!” cried Karmel, indignantly; “have you the assurance to meet me thus? *Mu.derer! Parricide!*”

As these words dropped sternly from the scout's lips, Sir Arthur started up from his chair, and then sank back again. His face had turned to an ashen hue, and his limbs trembled violently.

“Liar!” he gasped, between his firmly set teeth.

“Go on, sir,” said Karmel, with a bitter smile upon his lips. “You do not look like an injured man.”

“Out, vile dog! I know the lie thou hast cooked up to plague me with. I saw it in your ugly face when I first met thee. Believe him not! He lies in his heart, and in his teeth!”

“Say on,” spoke Karmel, calmly. “Say on, Sir Arthur. But I will tell my story to these people, nevertheless. Robert, call in your friends.”

Captain Pemberton arose and left the room, and when he returned he was followed by Eugene Deblois and half a dozen soldiers.

These latter men were members of Eugene's company. When he went to Amboy he left them at Newark; and when they found he did not return, as he said he would, part of his company came to New Brunswick in search of him. They arrived on the previous evening, and had arisen on the present morning just in season to see their beloved captain ride into the village, with his lady-love and two male companions. They were young men, tall and strong; and as they entered the parlor they arranged themselves by the door.

“Now, Arthur Lincoln,” said the scout, “I will tell you a simple story.”

“Ho—go on. 'Tis a brave thing to fashion lies, and then call your own audience to hear them spoken!”

“Never mind,” returned Karmel, not at all moved by the words of the other. “We'll go on. First, I would ask you if you remember Walter Marshall?”

Lincoln started at the sound of that name, but he managed to keep his countenance as it was—and that was bad enough.

“Gentlemen,” resumed the scout, turning towards the point where Robert and Eugene stood close together, “many years ago there were two boys growing up very near together in a country borough of England. Arthur Lincoln was the son of a titled father, while Walter Marshall was only the child of a retired merchant. Yet both parents were wealthy. As they—the boys—approached the age of manhood, Walter began to discover points of character in his friend which he did not like; yet he overlooked them all until a circumstance transpired which served to sever the bonds of friendship forever.

“Lord Lincoln died. When he was buried—on the very day of his burial—news came from India that his eldest son was dead. Thus was Arthur left the sole heir to those vast estates. In the evening Walter called upon the orphan heir, and ere he left he knew that Arthur Lincoln had murdered his own father!”

“Liar!” shrieked the baronet, springing to his feet. “It is false!—false as the very father of lies!”

“Mind you,” continued the scout, still speaking as before, and seeming to pay no attention to the words just uttered, “Walter Marshall had been to London with Arthur only a few weeks before, and was there cognizant of all the preparations for the murder, which was done by poison! Still he would not have been certain of the crime had not the parricide with his own lips confessed it!”

“Base liar! he did not confess it!” gasped Sir Arthur.

“He spoke very much like it,” resumed Karmel.

“He offered to tell Walter how he could send his father off in the same way. But enough of this. The evidence upon which Walter Marshall based his decision was more than circumstantial. It was positive; and from that time he could not associate with his friend as he had been wont to do. Arthur soon saw it—he saw that he was avoided—and shortly afterwards Walter received a note from him to this effect: ‘I know you suspect me of crime. If you breathe a word to a living soul on the subject you will die within twelve hours thereafter. I have men engaged who will not disappoint me!’

“Walter read the letter, and then tore it up. Shortly after this Arthur went to London, and there he plunged into dissipation of the worst kind.

“Meanwhile Walter was married. He married a girl whom he had long loved, and who, he felt, would make him happy. Her name was Ellen Ross. A year they lived together as happily as could be, and a child—a daughter—was born unto them. At the end of this time Walter's father died, and the son was obliged, a month afterwards, to go into Scotland on business.

“While he was gone Arthur Lincoln returned from London. And here let me say what Walter had not known: Ellen had once loved young Lincoln; but on account of his habits her parents had turned him away. Ah! she had never quite forgotten him! Had her parents allowed her to reject him all might have been well; but they had sent him off, and she never lost her pity for him.

“And during the young husband's absence Arthur Lincoln returned. He called upon Ellen—first as a friend—and she did not turn him away. He came again—and again. By and by he dropped the language of friendship, and took up the lover's plea! At first Ellen was frightened; but he worked upon her pity, and she sympathized with him. He saw his vantage, and he followed it up. With consummate skill he touched her heart-strings; and finally she bent before him. It was a long work on his part, but he accomplished it at length. Poor Ellen Marshall had become a maniac almost under his influence; the soft music of his tongue had turned her heart, and the continuous smile he wore in her presence when he was not upon his knees praying to her, melted away the virtue of her soul!

“Alas! in an evil hour the young wife consented to flee with her seducer! He told her of the new land across the sea, and painted the sweet home they would have there. He had money yet—much money. His estate had been sold, and the money was already on its way to the Colonies of America. And yet that money was not legally his. In the gaming-houses of the great city he had squandered all. His whole estate had been staked and lost; but he stole the title-deeds of a companion who was drunk, and then hastened home and sold them to a nobleman who had long been anxious to buy.

“The young mother could not leave her child. Lincoln urged her to do so, but she was fixed in that, and he yielded.

“And they came to America. A short time Ellen lived a life of wild excitement, and then the evil hour began its sorrows. In a few years Arthur Lincoln lost his love, and began to hate. Ellen was no more joyous; no more smiling; no more peaceful. Her seducer chided her, but she could not help it. Finally he confessed to her that he had not gained her wholly out of love, though he did love her. He had been led to the work at first from pure hatred of her husband. He both hated and feared Walter Marshall. He hated him because he would not be his companion; and because he was a better man; and because he had won for a wife one whom he could not win. This last thing stung him to the quick. Her parents had turned him away, and accepted Walter. He feared Walter, as you know.

“Meanwhile, the husband returned to his home. He entered the house—he found an old woman there whom he had hired for a nurse. He asked for his wife and little one. He was told they were not at home, but there was a letter for him. He took it—it was from Ellen. He opened it and read. It was very short, and blotted with tears. She only told him she was going away over the sea. That she had loved Arthur Lincoln first—that she loved him now. She had thought she loved her husband; but the old love was the strongest. She said, ‘God bless you!’ She said she should never see him again. And she asked him to forgive her! Then she wrote, ‘God forgive me!’ and signed her name! Oh! it was a—a—very ——”

Here the old scout stopped and bowed his head. A violent tremor shook his stout frame, and a deep sob broke from his lips.

And the others were most strangely affected. Rosalie was pale as death, and as she watched the speaker she seemed at times to stop breathing entirely. Robert, too, was most deeply moved. He had heard a part of the story before; but it was this latter portion that possessed the great interest. Elroy listened attentively, and the shades upon his countenance were many and various; though doubt and anxiety were the most apparent. As for the lawyer, he looked on with the same sort of interest with which he might have listened to the evidence in a murder trial.

“I cannot tell you how Walter Marshall lived from that hour,” resumed Karmel, after he had regained somewhat of his composure. “For long weeks he lay prostrate upon a bed of sickness, from which he had no desire to arise. His wife and child were gone! They had been his all of earth. But time passed and he recovered. Ellen's parents came and tried to comfort him; but they, poor souls, needed comforting as well.

“At the end of four years the wronged husband resolved to come to America, and hunt up his wife and child. He had made preparations to that effect, when he was urged to go to India and transact some business with the Company for Government. He finally accepted the office, which was one of more than usual trust, and instead of putting his effects on board the American packet, he put them into a state-room of an Indiaman.

He was in India six years, and then returned to England. A year was passed at home, but there was no joy for him. Again he resolved to start for the American colonies; and this time he did so. He changed all his property into cash, and bade adieu to his native land. He left the ship in Boston, and there made inquiries for Arthur Lincoln. He searched through that city; then to Rhode Island; then to Connecticut; then to New York; then to Philadelphia; and so on all over the land; but he found not what he sought.

“After this he returned to Boston; and there it was that he first studied into the wrongs the colonies were suffering. He had resolved to make this country his home; and he immediately became interested in all that could affect its welfare.

“Time passed on. He had much property, and most of it he invested there. At length the war broke out. Boston was besieged, and the question was fairly up for settlement by force of arms: Shall America be Free? Meanwhile, Walter learned that a man of the name of Arthur Lincoln lived in New Brunswick. He came here—he saw the man!

“Ah—then for the first time, he fully realized how many years had passed away since that fatal blow. Arthur had grown to an old man! Ellen was a woman of middle-age; and his child—he knew 'twas his own, for he had learned that they had had no children since their settlement here, seventeen years ago—that child had grown to be a beautiful maiden.

“For a while he thought of revealing himself and punishing the villain; but upon more deliberate reflection he concluded to wait. He wished to know how his wife felt—how the affections of his child were fixed—and thus know how to act. He reluctantly made up his mind that if he found his child truly beloved by her supposed father, and she in turn, with her heart's true affection fixed upon him, he would never dispel the illusion—never claim her—never know her as his. Yet he meant to remain in this section and watch for himself. He threw off his real name, and took the name of his mother; and thus he went at the work.

“And still time passed on. He had made the acquaintance of several Patriot officers, and had been introduced to Washington in Boston, with whom he became quite intimate. His recent connection with the British government officers had given him quite an insight into the characters of the British leaders, and to the American comander-in-chief he gave much valuable information. While here he received a letter from Washington requesting to see him. He went. The general asked him if he would take charge of the secret service of the Jersey's. He answered in the affirmative; and from that time he had his hands full.

“Fortune at length threw him into the power of the enemy. He was cast into a strong dungeon, and on the next day, he stood face to face with Arthur Lincoln! Again he was imprisoned, and at night his own sweet child came and set him free! Oh! she dreamed not then whom she was ——”

The old scout had to stop here. His feelings again overpowered him, and he buried his face in his hands. Rosalie had thus far remained silent; her frame had been quivering, and her heart leaping most painfully. But she could bear up no longer. With one low, wild cry, she bounded forward and sank upon the bosom of her own true father! Now she knew why she had so strangely loved that man, and she knew, too, why he had been so deeply moved in her presence. She did not speak—she could not. She could only cling frantically to that stout bosom, and weep in the fullness of her great joy.

The old man wound his arms about her, and, with big tears still rolling down his cheeks, he resumed his narrative. He spoke hurriedly now—like one who must make haste, or fail in his purpose for want of strength.

“I need not speak of Walter Marshall again as one other than myself,” he said, “for you know me now. My child freed me from prison, and I fled from the power of my enemies. Ere long I heard that Ellen was dying! Must she die and I not see her? I could not bear the thought. I knew that Lincoln did not treat her well—that she was unhappy, and, I believed, repentant. But she was in the midst of my deadly enemies. If they saw me I should surely die. At length I hit upon a plan. I found a man who said he could cut off my beard, and so arrange it upon a silken ground, that I could wear it again without anyone's detecting any change. I bade him do it. “He cut my beard carefully, arranging it as it came off, and I left him to have it prepared for me when I came back.

“With my face smooth, and with a wig which this same man lent me, I assumed a female disguise, and thus I came to this house—and thus I gained entrance to my wife!

“Oh! what a meeting was that! How many times have I thanked God since, that I came! Upon my bosom my wife received my forgiveness, and upon my bosom she poured out the story of her sufferings! Every night for long years had she prayed for me in secret; and her only hope beyond the good of her child had been that she might be taken home to God, and there, in the fullness of time, meet her husband, and know that she was forgiven! That she could meet me on earth in friendship she had not even dared to hope for. She told me how, long ago, her seducer had ceased to love her—how he had confessed that he had stolen her away mostly out of revenge and hatred upon me—and how he had never loved my child—never!

“She showed me a paper she had written for Rosalie. It was the simple story of her crime, her sufferings, and begging her loved one to forgive her, and also giving information to her—to Rosalie—of her true father. I was then in danger—I might not live to reveal myself to my child—so I sat down and wrote my forgiveness and my blessing. I pressed my beloved—oh! I loved her then! —I pressed her once more to my bosom—held her there a while—prayed with her—and then tore myself away!

“Oh! I wished then to see my child—to tell her who I was, but I dared not. It would not only have been too dangerous, but it would have thrown her into a state of excitement from which she not easily might have recovered. So I came away, only blessing her in my heart, and praying to God for his protection over her.

“Soon I learned of a fearful danger to which my child was exposed. The position of the British army here rendered it impossible for us to come on. But fortune threw one of the necessary instruments to the consummation of that dangerous plan into our power; and while we held him we knew Rosalie was safe. When he was set free, we followed him very closely; but yet a strange haste in evil on the part of the old villain came well nigh thwarting us. Yet we saved her that time; but only for the moment. A well-concocted plan placed us in the power of our enemies; but God meant not that such evil should triumph. Deliverance came—and we are here!—here just in time to avert the blow—in time to save my child—my own, my loved, my darling child!”

It was a strange scene which followed. The old scout sank exhausted into a seat, with Rosalie still clinging to him. All had expected that Lincoln would rave, and swear that it was all false. But he spoke not a word. Pale as death he sat there—he gazed about—he saw all eyes bent upon him—and, while a violent tremor suddenly shook his frame, he started from his chair and staggered to the door.—The soldiers would have stopped him, but Robert bade them not—and he passed on.

Elroy next arose to leave. He felt that he had no more to remain there for. But he was not permitted to go alone.

“You are a prisoner!” said Eugene, advancing and placing his hand upon his arm.

“Me? *Me* a prisoner?” he gasped, pale and trembling with fright. “Why?—W-w-what for?”

“We'll tell you at some more convenient opportunity.” And thus speaking, Eugene motioned for two of his men; and they came and led the trembling wretch away.

As the door closed upon the retiring prisoner, the old lawyer started to his feet. He worked his face up into a smile, and then approaching the old scout, he said, with a reckless profusion of bows and smirks:

“Really, my dear friend, I am delighted with the turn affairs have taken. It is truly happy to my soul. I welcome you to our midst. I never had perfect confidence in Mr. Lincoln—never. There was something in him I didn't like. He didn't have the kind, generous face you've got. Forgive the flattery; but I'm a plain spoken man, sir. You may—ahem—you may want some business done in the legal line. I should be happy——”

“Eugene,” interrupted the scout, in a quiet tone, “show this man to the door.”

In blank amazement the attorney was led out; and it was only by the most heroic self-denial that Eugene deprived himself of the luxury of administering one parting kick to the base hireling.

Over the scene of that reunion we will draw the curtain. It was a holy season, and full of pure emotions. As Rosalie had read the paper her mother had left, she understood those strange words she had heard shortly before the death-angel came. She knew now what that mother meant when she said—

“I have been wearing away for years! My soul has been the constant abode of a cankering grief, and my heart has lain beneath a weight of remorse that has well nigh crushed it! Remember my words, for at some time you shall know their meaning, though not while I live!”

Ah—they were plain now. Painfully plain!—The child sank upon her knees, and with uplifted heart and hands she prayed for the soul that had gone!

* * * * * *

Arthur Lincoln lay down upon his bed with an aching head. The doctor came and told him he had a heart-disease; and when he had said so, he asked the sick man if he had ever had any great misfortune over which he had brooded. Arthur Lincoln said no. But even when he spoke he remembered a father who once lived and loved him. He remembered that father's death; and he knew that since that hour he had never seen one moment of pure, calm joy!

Arthur Lincoln became very sick; and one day he bade Mrs. Lee send Rosalie to him. The girl came. The invalid drew her to him and asked her if she could forgive him.

And from that time Mrs. Reed came to his bedside no more. Rosalie sat by him, and ministered to his every want; and finally, when she became weak and exhausted, good Aunt Patience came back and helped her.

One afternoon, while the scout and Robert were at Van Ruter's, they received a message from Rosalie. Sir Arthur wished to see them. They went, and they found him dying. He reached out his thin hand to Robert and asked him to forgive him for all he had done towards his injury. And Robert forgave him freely.

Then Arthur Lincoln turned to the man whom, of all others, he had wronged the most on earth.

“Walter,” he whispered, in a husky, failing tone, “can you forgive me for all my wickedness to you? I am dying—I am passing away from the scene of my great crimes. Forgive me! Oh, forgive!”

“With all my heart!” answered Walter Marshall. “As I hope to be forgiven of God for my sins on earth, so do I forgive thee all!”

A faint gleam of gratitude swept across the face of Arthur Lincoln, and his lips moved. But he spoke no word. He was dead!

* * * * * *

Elroy Pemberton begged so hard, and promised so much, that Captain Deblois, by the consent of Robert, let him go. Shortly afterwards his father had a desirable offer for his place, and he sold it and went to England. Elroy went with him; and the cousins never met again.

* * * * * *

Time passed on. Days made weeks—weeks became months—and months rolled on to years. The din of war sounded o'er the land; and Liberty's battalians bore nobly on to victory!

It was a calm, a pleasant day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three. In that same parlor where we have witnessed such varied scenes, sat Rosalie and Clara—maidens no more—but wives and mothers. Aye—they had been married some years, for those laughing, prattling children are theirs—happy, happy children, with such mothers to love and bless them. And happy, happy mothers, with such children to love and bless.

A curly-headed boy goes to Rosalie's knees, and looks up into her face, and asks—

“When will papa come?”

“Hark! What sound is that?”

It is the sound of steps in the hall. The door is thrown open, and ere Rosalie or Clara can gain their feet two children cry out in joyous notes—

“Papa! Papa!”

Robert Pemberton leads the way. Eugene Deblois comes next; and while Rosalie and Clara are clinging wildly to the bosoms of their husbands, the children all rush for that old man who has just entered, and who stoops down and gathers them all into his embrace, and kisses them one after the other. And when they call him “Grand Pa,” we know him for Karmel the Scout.—Karmel of old—Karmel the Tory Trapper,—but now plain old Walter Marshall, one of the happiest men who lives with buried griefs.

“Dear Robert, must you go to battle any more?” asked Rosalie, eagerly, and with moistened eyes.

“No—no, sweet wife!” the husband answers. “The war is over! The last battle is fought! We shall leave you no more. Liberty has triumphed! —the enemy are conquered!—and AMERICA IS FREE!”

THE END.

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NATURAL AND UNNATURAL HAPPINESS.

It is of great use to consider the pleasures which constitute human happiness, as they are distinguished into natural and fantastical. Natural pleasures are those which, not depending on the fashion and caprice of any particular age or nation, are suited to human nature in general, and were intended by Providence as rewards for using our faculties agreeably to the ends for which they were given us. Fantastical pleasures are those which, having no natural fitness to delight our minds, pre-suppose some particular whim or taste accidentally prevailing in a set of people, to which it is owing that they please.

But the pleasure which naturally affects a human mind with the most lively and transporting touches, we take to be the sense that we act in the eye of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, that will crown our virtuous endeavors here, with a happiness hereafter, large as our desires, and lasting as our immortal souls. This is a perpetual spring of gladness in the mind. This lessens our calamities, and doubles our joys. Without this the highest state of life is insipid, and with it the lowest is a paradise.

OLD LETTERS.

BY MARY W. STANLEY GIBSON.

Yes—“old as the hills”—almost! The paper on which they were written has grown yellow and discolored—the ink has faded, and an illegible crease marks every place where they have been folded—and yet—oh, wondrous power of love—those words of kindness and affection still remain, though the hands that penned them, long since crumbled into dust!

Here is one from a mother to her boy. She was but a poor farmer's wife, and the writing is weak and irregular, and many a word is misspelled. But what of that? Does not the mother's heart throb in every line. When the lad read these words—“I pray every night, my dear son, that you may be a good man,” did not his eyes fill as quickly at the thought of the poor old mother on her knees, for him, as if she had written upon gilt-edged letter-paper, and had the “Speller and Definer” at her finger ends? Oh yes! To the loving heart, the rules of orthography and etymology are nothing, compared with one kind word from those it loves!

Here comes another, written in that singular style our grandmothers loved, with the d's turning up, and the s's turning down. Only a little confidential note about something “Simon” has said. And the young girl (she was young then, and pretty of course, for youth is always beautiful,) closes, by asking her friend to take tea with her that night. Doubtless “Simon” was fully discussed between them then. Perhaps he joined them before the moon rose—who can tell? We that have “Simons” in our own day and generation would like to think so.

Here comes another, written in a round schoolboy hand, and signed, with a great awkward flourish—“Frank H. Smith.” It is from a schoolboy to his parents and sisters at home. The lad died many and many a year ago, dear reader—long before you and I were born. But the letter has been treasured by those who loved him once, as their sole memento of “little Frank.” And now I sit here to-day, and read it, wondering how the boy felt when he penned the words—and remembering, with a strange mixture of awe and fear, the little grave with its plain head-stone marked “Frank,” by which I have so often stood in our village church-yard.

What is this commencing “My dear Husband,”—and folded so curiously? A letter from a wife at home to her absent husband. The language is plain and simple, and the body of the letter made up of country news, and gossip about the neighbors. But ever and anon, some little bit of pure sentiment flows unconsciously from her pen, and finds its way straight to the heart. So, while in one sentence we read that, “William Jones cut his foot very bad, yesterday afternoon, with a scythe;” in the next we see—“Oh, John, you cannot tell how lonesome I am without you. Home does not seem like home. When will you come back?”

And so on, throughout the letter. This simple sheet, torn and defaced as it is, would teach a lesson to many a fair and haughty dame who rolls down Broadway in her carriage, and ruins her husband by dress and parties. Aye—and to many others also, who are not rich enough to keep their carriages, or their affection! Our grandmothers were unfashionable enough to love their husbands—our grandfathers were well worthy of those noble hearts.

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A PERFECT GENTLEMAN.

One seldom passes a day without hearing some one described as “a perfect gentleman;” yet when it is asked “What is a perfect gentleman?” there are few who would venture to answer the question. Below we give the opinion of an eminent authority (whose writings have stood the test of more than a century) on this important subject. Let every one read it and profit thereby:

When a good artist would express any remarkable character in sculpture, he endeavors to work up his figure into all the perfections his imagination can form; and to imitate not so much what is, as what may or ought to be. I shall follow their example, in the idea I am going to trace out of a fine gentleman, by assembling together such qualifications as seem requisite to make the character complete. In order to do this I shall premise in general, that by a fine gentleman I mean a man completely qualified *as well for the service and good*, as for the ornament and delight of society. When I consider the frame of mind peculiar to a gentleman, I suppose it graced with all the dignity and elevation of spirit that human nature is capable of. To this I would have joined a clear understanding, a reason free from prejudice, a steady judgment, and an extensive knowledge. When I think of the heart of a gentleman, I imagine it firm and intrepid, void of all inordinate passions, and full of tenderness, compassion, and benevolence. When I view the fine gentleman with regard to his manners, methinks I see him modest without bashfulness, frank and affable without impertinence, obliging and complaisant without servility, cheerful and in good humor without noise. These amiable qualities are not easily obtained; neither are there many men that have a genius to excel this way. A finished gentleman is perhaps the most uncommon of all the great characters in life. Besides the natural endowments with which this distinguished man is to be born, he must run through a long series of education. Before he makes his appearance and shines in the world, he must be principled in religion, instructed in all the moral virtues, and led through the whole course of the polite arts and sciences. He should be no stranger to courts and to camps; he must travel to open his mind, to enlarge his views, to learn the policies and interests of foreign states, as well as to fashion and polish himself, and to get clear of national prejudices, of which every country has its share. To all these more essential improvements, he must not forget to add the fashionable ornaments of life, such as are the languages and the bodily exercises most in vogue; neither would I have him think even dress itself beneath his notice.

It is no very uncommon thing in the world to meet with men of probity; there are likewise a great many men of honor to be found. Men of courage, men of sense, and men of letters are frequent; but a true fine gentleman is what one seldom sees. He is properly a compound of the various good qualities that embellish mankind. As the great poet animates all the different parts of learning by the force of his genius, and irradiates all the compass of his knowledge by the lustre and brightness of his imagination; so all the great and solid perfections of life appear in the finished gentleman, with a beautiful gloss and varnish; everything he says or does is accompanied with a manner, or rather a charm, that draws the admiration and good-will of every beholder.

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THERE is no happy household but that in which both husband and wife have a generous forbearance for each other's follies.

AT REST.

BY ALICE CARY.

Her head was toward the West,
And her baby on her breast,
And all wide
Her black hair fell apart,
From her forehead cold and white,
Like a shadow from the light,
Or the madness from her heart,
When she died.

From her icy little hands
I untied the silken bands,—
On her feet,
Drew I slippers soft as wool;
And I sewed a cap of lace
With a lily next her face,
And strewed elm-leaves over all,
Very sweet.

Shall I tell you I was glad?
For the dead are never mad,—
Now no more
Would the phantoms of her brain,
That were only made of lies
Look out darkly from her eyes;
And the pining and the pain,
All were o'er.

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FOREST SKETCHES---NO. 17.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY COL. WALTER P. DUNLAP.

SNUFFING A SNUFFER.

We had had a hard day's work, and had accomplished just nothing at all. Ben had shot one huge bird—I don't know what it was, as I did not see it; but from his description of it I supposed it must have been a turkey-buzzard. He shot the bird, and it fell among some bushes. He went to the place, and the bird hobbled off. Ben gave chase, and after following it nearly half a mile, he managed to catch it. Old Fitzeben was with him, and as he got the game within his power he glorified himself exceedingly.

"Guess 'taint good for noff'n, ole feller," said the cook.

"Just you wait."

"But it smells strong," pursued Fitz.

"I differ," cried Ben.

"It's noff'n but skin, and fedders, and bone," suggested the persistent darkey.

"It makes nary difference," returned Ben. "You'll cook it, or over goes your gig!"

As Ben spoke he held the bird up by the huge tail-feathers; and while he shook the game in Fitzeben's face, the broad wings leaped apart, and, with one unearthly yell, the dearly-caught buzzard gave a spring, and away he went, leaving the fat hunter with his hand full of feathers, gazing rather foolishly after the swiftly-departing evidence of his skill.

After supper, while we were moaning over the fruitless result of our day's labor, Fitzeben told us the story of Ben's buzzard. This brought us to good humor, and as soon as the laugh, which had thus been raised at Ben's expense, passed off, Ned Hobson spoke:

"Well, boys," he said, "as humor seems to be the order of the evening, suppose I tell you about a comical affair that came under my own observation some time since?"

We told him to go ahead, and thus bidden he went on as follows:—

"Some years ago—but not many, however—I kept a hotel at Island Pond, in the State of Vermont. It was at the Yankee end of the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad. It was a very fair stand, and we had no reason to complain of the amount of custom; but I didn't exactly fancy the country nor the climate. The winters there were too cold for comfort, and the summers were no better than could be found elsewhere.

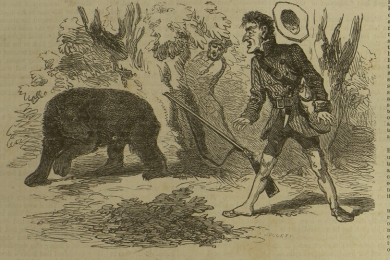
"Among the various things which we had for the amusement of our patrons were two black bears, between two and three years old. They had been taken in a cage-trap by my partner when quite young, and had since been brought up on our place. They were very playful, and never ill-natured if they were not annoyed. Rabbits were plenty in the neighborhood, but we had never yet given them any fresh meat. We fancied it would make 'em savage. At all events, we gave them as much bread and vegetables as they could eat, and the result was that they had none of that ugliness which you see in tame bears that are fed on game. They would play with any one, though sometimes rather roughly.

"One day in August, among the travellers who stopped at our hotel was a queer-looking chap, who seemed prepared to take the whole place by storm. As he entered the office he had upon one arm a carpet-bag, upon the other a game-bag, upon his right shoulder a double-barrelled rifle, upon his left a double-barrelled fowling-piece, while strapped to his back was a disjointed fish-pole, and suspended to a patent-leather belt about his waist was a huge bowie-knife. Behind him came our porter with a common gin-case, another carpet-bag, a fish-basket, and a pistol-box.

"You may think from this that the man who owned all this was a huge, savage-looking fellow. If you do, you are much mistaken. He was a comical chap all over. His body was rather slim, and had a kind of lop-sided bend to it sideways—just as though one side was heavier than the other. His legs were bowed, but not in nor out; they bent backwards, so that when he stood erect they seemed almost ready to collapse, or fold up the wrong way. And then his face was far from being a savage-looking face. His head was rather long and narrow; his ears standing out some; his eyes—my conscience, such eyes! They took up nearly half the face, and I verily believe you could have hung a hat on either one of them. His nose was a monstrous nose. *He* said 'twas a Roman nose. But it was really necessary to fill up the face.

"He wrote his name in the register—'AP. YOUNG RUDOLF, M. D.' I looked at it a long time, and wondered what it could mean. That '*Ap.*' puzzled me. But my partner, whose name was Glickey, said there was an American commodore in our navy named 'Ap. Catesby Jones.' Still this didn't satisfy me; and on the first favorable opportunity I asked him. It was just after supper. I was alone in the office, and he came in for a cigar. I opened the register; and then told him I didn't wish to be impudent, but I had a curiosity to know if the '*Ap.*' at the commencement of his name was a real Christian cognomen.

"'Ah,' he said, throwing himself into a comical attitude, and putting on a most knowing look, 'that same thing has puzzled thousands—*thousands*, sir! It is *not* a Christian appellative, sir, but is a signification of one of my professions. As you will see, by the last part of my name, I am a physician, sir,—a *physician*, sir! And I am more—I am an apothecary, sir,—an *apothecary!* It is an important profession, sir,—an *important* profession; as the lives of thousands may depend upon the skill with which the professional dispenser of drugs, chemicals, poisons, minerals, and medicines may compound his prescriptions, prescriptions, sir, which are to kill or to cure!—*to kill or to cure*, sir! *Apothecary*, sir, is the word. YOUNG is the American cognomen given me by my worthy father, sir. RUDOLF has a deeper signification, sir. You may have heard of Rudolf of Hapsburg—the first of that mighty Austrian house, sir. *His* name was Rudolf—*my* name is Rudolf. I leave you to draw your own conclusion, sir!'



"That is just about the way he spoke; and with that he lit his cigar and walked off. I made up my mind very soon touching *his* character. That evening he asked me if there was any game about the place. I told him there was plenty of it: and he then informed me that he intended to spend some time there. He said he was an experienced hunter, and had come up there partly to get away from the wearing labor of his profession, and partly to amuse himself in the woods.

"'I allow no man to go ahead of me in the use of fire-arms, sir!' he said. 'I have hunted wild beasts in all parts of the world, sir. I have shot the wild tiger of Spain, sir; and snuffed the gigantic elephant of Navarre! I have chased the antelope over the plains of Shinah, and snuffed the royal lion of Bengal! I have fought hand to hand with the mighty anaconda of the Nile, and snuffed the huge crocodile of the great Sahara! I never missed my mark; nor did I ever turn from my foe. Give me my trusty knife, and I fear no living thing!'

"I soon found that the fellow bragged to others just the same as he did to me; and I knew he did it earnestly. He had '*snuffed*' all sorts of game. He had snuffed a candle at twenty paces; and snuffed 'his man' at ten. In short, he had snuffed everything but his own tongue.

"For three days Ap. Young Rudolf, M. D., shouldered his fowling-piece after each meal and posted off for the woods, and each time came back empty-handed. He said he had seen nothing worth shooting, and hence had not discharged his gun. But we knew better than that, for we had heard the report of his piece often. He said he had hoped that he might fall in with some bears when he came up. He didn't expect to find anything of any consequence; but still if he could even find half-a-dozen old bears it would be better than no sport at all.

"I ventured to ask him if he ever shot a black bear.

"'Ho!' said he, with a look of astonishment, 'I've shot hundreds of them, sir,—*hundreds* of them!'

"'But,' said I, 'suppose you should come across one when you had no gun?'

"He put his hand on his bowie-knife, which he wore at his side, and with a tremendous bluster he told me,—'I should simply give him a taste of cold steel, sir,—of *cold steel!* The bear never lived who could overcome me. With my trusty knife I could snuff any bear that ever trod the earth, sir, —that ever trod the earth!'

"An idea had entered my head. I knew that Young Rudolf had not seen our bears. A number of gentlemen were stopping at the hotel who owned dogs, and as these animals annoyed the poor bears exceedingly, we had shut them up in a loft of the stable until our dog-owning patrons should depart. No one had been at all intimate with, or communicative to, the heroic *Ap.*, so he had not even heard of our bears.

"I communicated my plan to some of the sojourners, and they were delighted; and all agreed to help me. They had become disgusted with the fellow's insufferable bragging, and were anxious to see him taken down a peg. Or, they wanted to see the 'Snuffer *snuffed!*' as some of them expressed it.

"My plan was this: Both the bears were not only very tame, but one of them—the heaviest—had been taught several tricks. Glickey had learned him to fire off a pistol by pulling at a string which was attached to the trigger; and he had also learned him to play dead when fired at. Two years before a circus company were in that section, and with them was a learned dog that did this. Our cubs were then very small, and Glickey determined to learn one of them to perform that same trick. And he did it to perfection. *The General*—so we called the favorite bear,—would drop in an instant if any one stood near him and aimed a gun at him and fired. His next movement would depend upon circumstances. At a sign from Glickey or myself he would get up and limp around on three legs, as though he had been shot in the other one.

"However—I knew if the huge *Snuffer* fired at the General he would fall, and I furthermore knew that if Snuffer approached him he would get up to play with him. And, finally, I imagined that Snuffer might run; and if he did I knew General would run after him. At any rate, I was willing to venture the result so far as Snuffer's knife was concerned.

"This was in the morning. In the afternoon I told the snuffing Rudolf that I believed there was a black bear over beyond a certain piece of woods. 'Where?' he cried, spinning around like a top. 'Just over beyond that open lot,' I told him, pointing out the place. He turned, and I could see a peculiar quiver of the lips as he looked off. I read his thoughts in a moment.

"'Let's go and snuff him,' said he.

"'Who?' said I.

"'O—the lot of us,' said he.

"'Daren't you go alone, just to shoot a common black bear?' said I.

"'What?' he yelled, leaping up till his crooked legs looked like the two halves of a broken skirt-hoop turned backwards. 'Daren't *I* go? Where's yer bear? Show me an army of 'em!'

"There's only one, I guess; and that's a young one,' I told him.

"From that moment the Snuffer was rampant. He flew around like a bunch of crooked spikes suspended by a twisted string. He got his double-barrelled rifle and loaded it carefully, and then went to pull on his leather leggings. A gentleman in the house, who had a steel rod armed at one end with a very fine, sharp screw, made on purpose for extracting balls, caught the rifle and soon had both bullets out. A couple of wads were then driven in, and the piece put back in its place some five minutes before Snuffer made his appearance.

"From Young Rudolf's manner I very readily concluded that he did not mean to find the bear. He meant to gain the cover of the woods, and there hide himself until such time as he could consistently return with the story that he'd hunted in vain, and so on. So I had taken my steps accordingly. We knew that either one of the bears might be taken out with safety, for one would not go off and leave the other. Perhaps if both had been left in the woods together they would have gone off; but we knew that if one were to be set down in the woods anywhere alone he would make for his mate.

"Glickey had taken the General out, the dogs having been shut up, and I had instructed him to leave him in the sled-path only some fifteen or twenty rods from the edge of the wood; having first fed him to repletion. Bruin was taken out blindfolded, so that Glickey might have an opportunity to get out of his way and hide; for the General would not have left his master otherwise. The hoodwink was so fixed that the bear could pull it off with his paws in a few moments.

"Of course Glickey was in the wood to watch, so we had all the Snuffer's movements in detail; and I will give them in regular order.

"The heroic compounder of drugs, poisons, and medicines shouldered his bulletless rifle, and with his huge knife at his side, he started When he had gained the wood he turned to see if he was shut out from our sight. At a few steps further Glickey, from his hiding-place, saw him. He got fairly into the wood and stopped. Having gazed around, he cocked his rifle—both hammers—and then moved forward much as a man would who was going among a gang of robbers of a dark night. Presently he stopped, and looked around again. A tree-toad near at hand gave a croak. Snuffer leaped a foot from the ground, and shook like an aspen. Directly he saw something black in the path before him. It was a bear!

"For a moment the poor fellow was too weak to move. But the bear had stopped, and with a frantic movement he brought his rifle to his shoulder and fired. Had there been a ball in it Glickey would have been shot, as likely as not Yet the bear dropped. Aye—Snuffer saw him fall! He stood there trembling for half a minute, and then, drawing his knife, he rushed forward. He had gone half way when Bruin arose! Snuffer gave one yell of terror and turned. He ran a dozen steps, and then looked behind him. The bear was after him at full leap!

"Snuffer dropped knife and rifle, and ran for dear life. The bear gained on him, but the heroic Snuffer had ten rods the start. We, who stood upon the stoop of the hotel, heard the yells of the frightened man, and we joined him. I never saw a more ludicrous sight. The poor fellow's hat was gone—his long hair was flying in the wind—his bent legs were moving as I never saw legs move before—and his yells for help were frantic. Old Bruin seemed to enjoy the sport hugely. He entered into it with a zest, and put in with all his power.

"At length Ap. Young Rudolf, M D., reached the stoop.

"'Oh! Mercy! Save me! Don't let him get me! Don't let him eat me up! Oh! oh! O-o-o-ho! Bo-o-o-h!'

"With this dying shriek upon his lips he sank down upon the stoop, and covered his face with his hands.

"'Look out!' cried one of the boarders.

"'Oh! O-o-o-oh-ho! Bo-o-o-oh!' yelled Snuffer, with a spasmodic leap to his feet, where he stood, the very type of absolute terror and dispair. Those eyes of his looked now like two great globes of glowing matter sticking out from his head—his hair seemed to stand on end—his hands were half raised, with the fingers spread—and his whole frame shook as though it would fall in pieces.

"'Look here, Snuffer,' said I. He looked, and saw the bear at my feet with his head upon my knee, and I patting his shaggy shoulder!

"The man started back and took another look.

"'Is—a—that—a—the—a—b-b-b-*ear?*' he gasped, sinking together like a wet umbrella.

"'Yes, sir,' said I. 'Was ye afraid he'd *snuff* ye?'

"Ap. Young Rudolf, M. D., stood a full minute gazing first upon me, and then upon the bear. Then he turned and entered the house. That night he had supper in his room; and after that he gave a boy two shillings to go out and get his gun and knife. How he slept that night, I don't know. All I know is, on the next morning he took the first down train for Portland—carpet-bags, hunting-bags, gin-case, guns, knives, and all, —and I have not seen him since; though I have heard that he keeps an apothecary's shop, or did a short time since, in a village not far from the aforementioned rail-road. And even there the story leaked out; so that, to this day, he is called THE SNUFFER."

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A SUGGESTION TO MEN OF SENSE.—It were to be wished that all men of sense would think it worth their while to reflect upon the dignity of Christian virtues; it would possibly enlarge their souls into such a contempt of what fashion and prejudice have made honorable, that their duty, inclination, and honor, would tend the same way, and make all their lives a uniform act of religion and virtue.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

AN ADMIRER OF THE LEDGER says "he thinks that young ladies should have more sense than to ask so many trifling questions about love and etiquette," which we "so good-naturedly answer." What sort of a question would our correspondent think a sensible question? One about the plurality of worlds, the squaring of the circle, or the constitution of matter? Our opinion is that young ladies think too little and know too little about the essentials of love and good manners, which are two of the most important things for them on earth. Nothing is frivolous which concerns domestic life and the improvement of personal behavior and social etiquette, in which so much of human happiness or misery originates. It would be well for many families if both males and females attended more to these important subjects. Not all the knowledge of all the cyclopedias can make a man so agreeable or so good as pleasant manners and a loving, generous disposition. It is a bad sign of a man when he cannot enjoy a little small talk. All the greatest minds have at times delighted in it. Even those who carp at it in others are not sparing of it themselves—only their small talk is our, and crabbed, and surly, and contemptible, instead of airy, and pleasant, and entertaining, and agreeable.

FREE ACADEMY BOY.—We do not understand ventriloquism. It is a natural gift and cannot be learned; consequently no one can *teach* it to you.

G. C. M. E.—A minor cannot hold real estate in his own name; your minority does not end until you are twenty-one years old.

EUGENIE wants to know if she would be considered a flirt for sending a present to a young man whose hand she has just refused. He is a "real good young man," she says, and as she knows he feels very bad she would like to do something to cheer him up; but if there is danger that the gift would be misunderstood she will not send it, &c., &c. Eugenie probably knows his disposition and mind better than we do, and should therefore be a better judge than we of the effect a gift from her would have upon him. If he is a very sensible man and would not think of marrying a woman who had refused him, the present would do no harm; but if he is a person who would permit a woman to trifle with him at her pleasure and in whom the gift would excite hopes which Eugenie is beforehand resolved to disappoint, it would be like reviving a culprit that is already half-hanged merely to hang him over again.

INQUIRER.—No. Credulity and belief are not synonymous. They may have been used so originally, but custom has now established a distinction. Credulity implies a degree of weakness and ignorance, belief does not. We *believe* that which we do not know, but which seems more probable and more reasonable than the contrary. We are *credulous* when we hastily give our assent to what a careful examination by an enlightened judgment would occasion us to reject as an absurdity. Belief is a most important "institution." The best and the largest portion of our ideas are founded on belief. Our loves, our friendships, our hopes, and our highest religious consolations spring from belief. Knowledge is like the enduring but barren granite; belief, the rich and fruitful garden of delights; credulity a bottomless quagmire.

THOMAS.—No—no, you foolish boy! Do not run away from home for any such cause. According to your own story, your father was in the right; and, could we hear his version of the affair, it would undoubtedly appear that you were most flagrantly in the wrong. You acted wisely, however, in determining to wait until our answer reaches you; by that time your passions will have cooled, and reflection will have convinced you that your father was much nearer right and yourself much nearer wrong than when you wrote to us. Stay at home and be the comfort of your parents in their old age; and when in after years you shall stand by their graves, you will feel unspeakably thankful that no selfish freak of passion tempted you to desert them.

A LADY READER, in Cincinnati, says that on being introduced to a stranger, at a party, he took the liberty of kissing her hand before the company. Perceiving by her manner that she was offended, he offered an apology in private, which she declined to accept; and she wishes to know if she did right. Yes, most certainly. The apology should have been as public as the offence. A man who had committed such an impertinence should have been turned out of the assembly and not again admitted into decent society until he had undergone a salutary probation. If such offences were not met with proper reproof society would soon degenerate into savageism.

R. H.—No. Wait until you can earn more. A dollar and a-half a day in a city, is not enough to get married on. Suppose your wife should be ill; or yourself should be sick; or suppose both of you should be stricken down at the same time; or suppose you should be thrown out of employment; what could you do in such emergencies? Work hard and live economically for a few years, that you may lay up a few hundred dollars, before you think of getting married; and your after life will be far more happy and successful than if you heedlessly rush into circumstances which may cripple and overwhelm you.

JAMES M. W.—If your teacher insists on your following the orthography of Walker in all your compositions, you had better quit his school and place yourself under the instruction of some one who has not been asleep for the last quarter of a century. The orthography of Walker can never by any possibility become the standard in this country. The genius of improvement and radicalism is beginning to reform even Webster's, which was once thought so very extreme in its innovations.

CAROLINE, Cincinnati.—We regret you should be so disappointed by the mails in regard to receiving your paper. When your subscription expires your best way will be to buy the LEDGER at Mr. Hunt's news-office in your city, or from any other dealer there, and then you will not be at the mercy of irregular *mails*, but will be served with punctuality by the most prompt and regular *males*.

CLARA.—You are mistaken when you say you love both the lovers "just the same." You love neither of them, or you could never suppose that you love them both. Love always concentrates itself on *one*—the only beloved. So you had better marry neither of them; at least until you love one of them to the exclusion of all regard for the other.

JENNY.—There would be no impropriety in exchanging daguerreotypes with a gentleman whom your family knows to be worthy of esteem, although you have no particular regard for him. But you should consult your parents about the matter and see if they approve it, before making the exchange.

MISS E. L. wishes us to instruct her how to act with a beau who has got out of temper. We do not know how to manage such creatures, never having had any experience with them. On general principles, however, we should say that when a man is out of temper a woman had better let him alone entirely, or else set about putting him in good temper again.

LUCY.—This young lady says that she is often told that she has "handsome, wicked eyes," and she wants to know whether she ought to regard it as a compliment or an insult. It strikes us that Lucy considers it a compliment, and a very pleasant one, too, or she would not have sent a letter hundreds of miles to tell us about it.

EMELINE J.—We do not know of anything that is a certain cure for tooth-ache, except the extraction of the aching tooth. Nerve youself up for the trial, and have the tooth taken out. Do not take chloroform, no matter if your family physician did advise you to do so.

JAMES T. C.—A thousand dollars and his parents' consent is a good basis for a young man's marriage, but nineteen is too young an age. You had better wait until you are twenty-one at least, and in the meanwhile make your thousand dollars two, three or five thousand dollars if possible.

HELEN.—We know nothing about the "Association" to which you refer. It is not an evidence of good taste for a woman to apply the epithets "dear" and "dearest" to any man except her husband, brother, son, father, or betrothed lover.

A READER, Greenville.—There could be no harm in a young man's asking the permission of his sweetheart's parents to keep her company; such a course would be courteous and eminently proper.

M. W.—We regret our inability to aid you. It is impossible for us to engage any new contributors; nor can we recommend you to any other publishing establishment.

SELIMA.—We cannot agree with you that marriage can be dissoluble at the will of the parties. Your own extremely hard case has warped your mind in regard to this subject. Marriage is the oldest institution in the world. It is the commencement and the foundation of human society. It is both natural and divine, and it is only the State—the civil power that dissolves it. If we have a bad wife or a bad husband it is a misfortune, as it is a misfortune to have a bad constitution, a bad head, or a bad heart. The separation of husbands and wives who have children is altogether evil, and should be tolerated only in extreme cases. As for that "perfect union of hearts," &c., for which you sigh, we fear that in this world at least you will find it but a flimsy dream.

RINALDO.—You can not love the girl much, or you would not feel so bad about having expended a few dollars for her. We rather suspect that it is not Cupid but cupidity that moves you. True love is charitable, noble, generous, and not given to sneaking suspicions. A man should always treat his sweetheart and his wife with unquestioning confidence. Jealousy begets discontent, distrust, and finally disgust, in the heart of the falsely suspected wife or lady-love, and then it requires weary years to win her back again to her first fresh, impulsive and generous confidence, if, indeed, such a result can be compassed. Beware of avarice and jealousy, Rinaldo.

A YOUNG MAN, of Peoria, Illinois, (whose initials we will not give,) sends us a very flattering description of his personal appearance, written in most primitive style of orthography and chirography, and says that his father is worth $150,000. He wants to marry, and says if we will publish his prospectus of himself we "shall not lose a friend." That is a "strong inducement," but we must reluctantly decline it. We consider "matrimonial advertising" a very vulgar business; besides, we think that a man of the age, size and accomplishments of our Peorian, who has a father worth $150,000, had better learn to spell, and write a decent hand, before he thinks of marriage.

C. G. CORNELL.—We can furnish you with LEDGERS as far back as the commencement of the story of "Orion the Goldbeater," and will let your subscription date from that time. We will not, however, let you have the LEDGER a year for $1,50 "because there is already a club of two in your place." Subscribers who wish to avail themselves of club prices *must subscribe in clubs* (all at one time,) and not send their money dribbling along, one at a time.

A. W. S.—You were to blame. A man should always return a respectable woman's bow, no matter whether he is acquainted with her or not. You would not have been justified in bowing to her first in the street or elsewhere, after a mere ball-room introduction; but *she* had a right to bow to *you*; and it was your duty to return the salute. The rules of etiquette in regard to *such matters* are for the protection of ladies only; men can protect themselves.

A SUBSCRIBER, Philadelphia.—None of our agents have anything to do with the LEDGER except to sell it. They can give no information concerning the management of any of its departments. As for the case you mention, you must manage it as you best can. If you have given the girl any legal hold upon you, you will be held legally responsible for the fulfilment of your engagements. We charge nothing for answering communications in this department of the LEDGER.

WILLIE K.—The "three graces" are three mythological beings, who embody a philosophical and spiritual conception of what is most eminently lovely and beautiful in physical and social nature. In classical mythology they are represented as three exquisitely beautiful sisters, the attendants of Venus, and are named Aglaia (*splendor*), Euphrosyne (*joy*), and Thalia (*pleasure*).

A PERPLEXED YOUNG LADY.—Whether or not it would be judicious for a lady to accept an invitation to go to a place of amusement with a man whom she has seen only four times, must, in the nature of things, depend upon so many impalpable influences, that nobody but the lady herself can decide. If she has any doubts upon the subject, *that*, in our opinion, is proof that she should *not* accept the invitation.

SNOW.—Yes. We take postage stamps for subscriptions. The LEDGER had a larger circulation than any other paper of its class *before* we published the "Gun-Maker of Moscow." It now has a circulation equal to that of any seven papers in New-York, any seven in Boston, or any seven in Philadelphia.

C. H.—Back numbers of the LEDGER cost just the same a piece as the "present number," namely four cents. A volume of the LEDGER can be bound for 75 cents. Mr. Alexander, the book-binder, at 83 Centre street, will bind it for that price. We cannot undertake to forward the numbers to him for you. We are too busy for that.

GREEN ISLAND.—Of course it would be improper for a girl to tell her friends she was married to a man when she was not, no matter for what reason he wished her to corroborate such a story. It would not only be improper, but it would be silly and false, and might occasion her character to be irreparably injured.

WILLIAM R.—You seem to have made a great mistake. To tell a person that his arguments, or reasoning, or statements are "fallacious," is not at all equivalent to charging him with lying. It is simply to say that they are inconclusive, or unfounded, or that he is himself mistaken in regard to what he supposes to be the facts of the case.

ELIZA B. FURRER.—Subscribers had better keep an account of the time for which they have subscribed, and send in their renewals a few weeks in advance. We always stop sending the LEDGER as soon as a person's subscription expires. New York and its suburbs contain nearly a million of inhabitants.

H. S.—A girl may fall properly in love at sixteen, or even at fourteen; but children of those tender ages should always hearken unto the voice of parental counsel; and above all, a girl so young should have no confidante more trusted in than her mother.

REGRET.—If the young lady is satisfied that she was in the wrong and her lover in the right, and is now heartily repentant, it would not be improper for her to inform him of the fact. If she does so, her letter should be brief, frank, to the point, and with as little sentimentality as possible.

H. S. M. and SISTER.—Yes: Your father can compel the man to return the ring, if you will go before a judge and make the necessary affidavits. In order to have the business done up with certainty, you had better put it in the hands of a lawyer.

RICHELIEU.—The girl is right in not entering into a marrige engagement at sixteen, and you are wrong in attempting to entangle her in such a promise while she is so young. You should be more generous and wait until *she* is ready to decide.

READER.—If the young lady does not wish the gentleman to continue paying his attentions to her, and he will not take the hint, she had better tell him the truth in a kind and lady-like manner. That is the only way to manage such a case.

MISS M. F. G.—You should study all the spare time you can get, and in that way you can qualify yourself to take higher rank as a teacher. Your school cannot consume more than half your available time, and you ought to study at least three hours every day.

S. S.—It is not *necessary* for a young man to go through college, in order to succeed as a lawyer, but it would be a most advantageous thing for him to do, and one which he would experience the benefit of every day of his professional life.

C. W. T.—No. You would not be blameworthy should you discontinue the engagement, nor would the lady; it would probably be better for both of you to have the engagement terminated.

J. M. K.—No. It is impossible to buy a commission in the U. S. Army or Navy. In the LEDGER of March 14th you will find a full statement in regard to the application for appointment as a cadet at the Military Academy at West Point.

A SCHOOLBOY.—Sometimes we are delayed in printing back numbers of the LEDGER; but you can always get them, although you will have to wait a week or two sometimes; as a general rule, however, we keep them on hand.

A FRIEND IN LOVE.—If you cannot decide whether it is best for you to marry, you had better postpone the matter until you fall heir to a good sound judgment, on which you can rely, and then follow its dictates.

PILGRIM.—A man who would want his bed warmed at all must be a babyish fellow; but one who would wish his mother to warm it for him cannot be far removed from a selfish vagabond.

R. C. W. C.—The postage on transient newspapers and pamphlets must be pre-paid; but back numbers can be sent from the office of publication without pre-paying the postage.

JAMES V. B.—Take your mother's advice, and stay at home. A boy of your age can have no better counsellor than his mother.

P. T. T.—Do nothing at all about the matter, except to behave towards the young lady in the most punctilious and decidedly not-engaged manner.

H. I.—When a man is in love, and is too timid to make the fact known to the person beloved, what is he to do? It strikes us that such a lover is destined to do nothing.

F. P. U.—We know nothing about the paper to which you refer; all we can advise you to do is, not to trust parties about whose responsibility you are ignorant.

A CUBAN.—You must reside in the country five years before you can become a naturalized citizen.

H. & H.—No. We can supply LEDGERS only as far back as June 7th, 1856.

FRANK.—Chicago would be a good place for you to try your fortunes in.

X. Y. Z.—Those who sell the LEDGER buy it at their own risk; we never send the paper on sale to any one.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*